

SHIRE OF
CAMPASPE



Shire of Moira Shire of Campaspe

Regional Rural Land Use Strategy Implementation

*Final Report
August 2010*



RMCG

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International Standards
 Certification
 QAC/R61/0611

Document Review & Authorisation**Job Number: 22-M-05**

Document Version	Final/Draft	Date	Author	Reviewed By	Checked by BUG	Release Approved By	Issued to	Copies	Comments
1.0	Draft	31.5.2010	S McGuinness	S McGuinness		S McGuinness	R Whiting A Cowin L Smith	3(e)	Feedback
1.1	Draft	28.6.2010	S McGuinness	S McGuinness	T Reed	S McGuinness	R Whiting A Cowin L Smith	3(e)	Review
1.2	Final	12.8.2010	S McGuinness	S McGuinness		S McGuinness	R Whiting A Cowin J Keaney	3(e)	

Note: (e) after number of copies indicates electronic distribution

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Executive Summary

In 2008, Campaspe and Moira Councils adopted the Regional Rural Land Use Strategy. The key objective of the strategy is to secure and promote the future of agriculture across the region through the respective Council planning schemes. The Regional Rural Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) noted the following key strategic elements in relation to rural land:

- The region is Australia's productive food bowl based primarily on dairy products and fruit production;
- The scale of production has resulted in Australia's greatest concentration of food processing industries and workforce;
- The economy and liveability of the region are integrated with and dependent on agriculture and its continuation; and
- The series of water reforms and the potential for new areas to be opened up for intensive production provide opportunity for expansion in the level of agricultural production.

The strategy is based on the following Councillor position with regard to the future of rural land:

- Agriculture is and will remain the major economic driver of the region;
- Facilitate growth of existing farm businesses;
- Facilitate growth of new agricultural investment; and
- Provide for hobby farming.

The key strategic directions or principles outlined in the RRLUS for achieving this vision include:

Agriculture:

- Water security;
- Minimal fragmentation;
- Efficient irrigation set up;
- Efficient infrastructure envelope (dwelling/shed location);
- Complementary infrastructure (roads, power etc); and
- Limit incompatible land uses/sensitive land uses – including tourism and non-farm housing.

Amenity living / hobby farming

- Close to existing residential areas;
- Good amenity – water views, undulating landscape;
- Buffer to agriculture;
- Efficient service provision;
- Protect landscape values;
- Requirements for tourism need to be recognised; and
- High amenity areas need to be well managed and the need to avoid areas with agricultural infrastructure such as hail guns, frost fans that are likely to compromise tourist operations but are also likely to lead to measures that will result in agricultural production being compromised.

The RRLUS recommended a suite of planning controls for the agricultural areas identified as: Growth – Farming Zone 1, Consolidation – Farming Zone 2, Niche – Farming Zone 3. The planning controls are summarised in the following table.

	Lot size minima	Subdivision	Re-subdivision – Boundary realignments	Excision	Dwellings	Ancillary tourism
FZ1	Irrigation: 100ha Dryland: 250ha	Performance based New/smaller lots rarely required	Yes – for restructure/consolidation purposes only	No – lack of neighbours is a key driver of growth	No – new dwellings are not required to support agriculture growth	No – potential for conflict
FZ2	Irrigated: 40ha Dryland 160ha	Performance based New smaller lots rarely required	Yes – for restructure/consolidation purposes only	Yes – where restructure is an outcome and subdivision can be designed to minimise neighbour impact	No – new dwellings are not required to support agriculture growth	No – potential for conflict
FZ3	None specified	Performance based New smaller lots rarely required	Yes – for restructure/consolidation purposes only	No – lots are generally of a size that will support small scale agriculture in their own right and a dwelling will be required to support this	Yes – where it can be demonstrated it is to support the productive use of the land consistent with the direction of the area	Yes – but carefully managed to prevent conflict and impact on agricultural operations

Following adoption of the strategy and in progressing to implementation, Campaspe and Moira noted the following issues in relation to implementation of this suite of controls and the Rural Activity Zone and Rural Conservation Zone.

RMCG was engaged by Moira and Campaspe to undertake further review and assessment to address the issues. This report documents the findings of this additional review and will form an addendum to the RRLUS to assist with its implementation.

Farming Zone

The RRLUS recommended a suite of planning controls for the agricultural areas identified as: Growth – Farming Zone 1, Consolidation – Farming Zone 2, Niche – Farming Zone 3. The planning controls are summarised in Table 2-1. Campaspe and Moira noted the following issues in relation to implementation of this suite of controls:

- The RRLUS provides limited justification for the recommended minimum lot size for dwellings in the Farming Zone 1 and 2 and no lot size minima were recommended for Farming Zone 3.
- The RRLUS recommended that no minimum lot size for subdivision be specified and that assessment of permits for subdivision should be performance-based.
- The RRLUS recommends different lot size minima for irrigated land and dryland. To implement this planning policy requires that the irrigation areas and dryland areas be mapped. Water trading, fluctuating water allocations and the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) means that the location of irrigation and dryland will vary in the short and long term. An alternative approach is required to simplify the achievement of the land use outcomes.
- Identify other policy instruments required to achieve the strategic objectives and land use outcomes and support decision-making, particularly around dwellings, in the Farming Zone.

The purpose of setting a *minimum subdivision size* is to provide land parcels for farm growth through acquisition of additional land, for land parcels to be easily transferred between farming businesses, allow for adoption of efficient management and production practices and avoid fragmentation of rural land to ensure that the landscape remains viable for farming.

The purpose of setting a *minimum lot size below which a permit is required for a dwelling* is to afford Council the opportunity to assess whether a dwelling is genuinely required for the agricultural use of the land and to ensure that dwelling development does not compromise the agricultural future of the land.

In the absence of an established methodology for determining minimum lot size, the following considerations were used in this study:

- An assessment of the Interim Planning Controls introduced during development of the RRLUS which saw the minimum lot size for subdivisions and dwellings in the Farming Zone set at 100ha on irrigated land and 250ha on dryland;
- A review of recent rural strategic work in other municipalities;
- An analysis of farm size and productive land units;
- Current pattern of lot and property sizes; and
- Land use outcomes to be achieved through the use of lot size minima.

Based on the assessment the following lot size minima are recommended:

Minimum lot size for subdivision:

- Farming Zone 1 - 100ha
- Farming Zone 2 – 100ha
- Farming Zone 3 – 40ha

Minimum lot size for which no permit is required for a dwelling:

- Farming Zone 1 – 250ha
- Farming Zone 2 – 250ha
- Farming Zone 3 – 40ha

In addition to the lot size minima, it is recommended that a standard set of policy be prepared to provide guidance on rural subdivision and housing.

Tourism

The RRLUS made recommendations for application of the Rural Activity Zone to provide opportunities for rural tourism. Campaspe and Moira noted the need for a more detailed assessment of these and other areas to provide a more robust justification for application of the Rural Activity Zone. The assessment was based on criteria drawn from:

- The Campaspe and Moira Planning Schemes
- Relevant tourism strategies
- The Zone definition

- Planning Practice Note for the Application of the Rural Zones
- RRLUS strategic directions

Rural Activity Zone

There is strong support for rural-based tourism that builds on existing tourism activities and takes advantage of the natural attributes of the region including the Murray River and the agricultural landscape and produce. The criteria or land attributes used for identifying land suitable for application of the Rural Activity Zone in Campaspe and Moira included:

- Proximity to existing townships
- Accessibility to New South Wales townships
- Proximity to existing tourism uses
- Proximity to the Murray River
- Proximity to National and State Reserves
- Current planning controls and settlement strategies
- Proximity to NVIRP backbone
- Agricultural quality
- Existing settlement pattern (lot sizes)

Based on these criteria the Rural Activity Zone is recommended for application to areas:

- West of Echuca
- East and west of Yarrawonga
- East of Cobram

The strategic objectives for these areas include:

- To promote and encourage a diverse range of agricultural activities, which do not rely upon large land holdings.
- To promote and encourage tourism use and development that is compatible with agricultural production and the environmental attributes of the area.
- To discourage uses in the Rural Activity Zone which can be reasonably accommodated in an urban zone.
- To protect the rural character of the Shire by minimising the visual intrusion of new buildings on the natural landscape, particularly from highways and the Murray River.
- To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.
- To ensure that non-agricultural uses, particularly dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.

The preferred mix of uses in the Rural Activity Zone include:

- Agriculture
- Tourist and recreational activities

- Group accommodation associated with tourist or recreational activities (including backpacker accommodation, camping and caravan park, cabins, residential motel etc)
- Restaurant, but only in association with a tourist / recreational activity

Uses that would not be supported include:

- convenience shop
- equestrian supplies
- motor racing track
- hotel
- landscape gardening supplies
- Store, tavern and similar uses
- intensive animal husbandry, cattle feedlot
- Residential hotel
- Service station

In the Rural Activity Zone dwellings are a Section 2 use and therefore all new dwellings will require a permit. The primary purpose of the Rural Activity Zone is to provide for agriculture and where appropriate, some other compatible uses. The Rural Activity Zone does not seek to provide for rural residential outcomes. Increased dwelling development will ultimately compromise the values of the areas identified for application of the Rural Activity Zone as suitable for agriculture and rural-based tourism. Therefore, it is recommended that the Rural Housing Policy proposed for the Farming Zone also apply to land zoned for Rural Activity.

The land within the proposed Rural Activity Zone is already substantially subdivided and further subdivision should be avoided. It is recommended therefore that the minimum lot size for subdivision be set at 40ha. To avoid further fragmentation boundary realignments, re-subdivision and excision will be strongly discouraged.

Rural Conservation Zone

The RRLUS recommended areas for application of the Rural Conservation Zone. As the reasons for this recommendation were not clear, Moira and Campaspe requested that these areas be reviewed in further detail as part of this project.

The review of the area nominated for Rural Conservation Zone in Moira could not establish attributes that provided strong support for the Rural Conservation Zone. It is the recommendation of this report that the Rural Conservation Zone should not be applied to the area nominated in Moira based on the information provided in the RRLUS.

The RRLUS nominated land around Rushworth for application of the Rural Conservation Zone based on the vegetative cover of the land. As part of this review, Campaspe undertook more detailed mapping of the area to identify the extent of dwelling development.

Closer review of the current land use and zoning of this land found that:

- Land north of Rushworth nominated for Rural Conservation Zone is cleared, held in large allotments and is being farmed;

- Public land, including the Rushworth State Forest and zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone has been incorrectly included in the area nominated for Rural Conservation Zone; and
- There is extensive dwelling development, particularly the area fringing the Public Conservation and Resource Zone.

It is the conclusion of this review is that the Rural Conservation Zone should not be applied to the land as nominated in the RRLUS but that the:

- Area to the north of Rushworth should remain in the Farming Zone as Farming Zone 1; and
- Area around Rushworth township is reviewed as part of a small towns settlement study to determine its most appropriate use and planning policy.

1 Regional Rural Land Use Strategy vision and strategic objectives

1.1 Key strategic elements

The Regional Rural Land Use Strategy (RRLUS) noted the following key strategic elements in relation to rural land:

- The region is Australia's productive food bowl based primarily on dairy products and fruit production;
- The scale of production has resulted in Australia's greatest concentration of food processing industries and workforce;
- The economy and liveability of the region are integrated with and dependent on agriculture and its continuation; and
- The series of water reforms and the potential for new areas to be opened up for intensive production provide opportunity for expansion in the level of agricultural production.

1.2 Vision

The RRLUS noted the following Councillor position with regard to the future of rural land:

- Agriculture is and will remain the major economic driver of the region;
- Facilitate growth of existing farm businesses;
- Facilitate growth of new agricultural investment; and
- Provide for hobby farming.

1.2.1 Key strategic directions

The key strategic directions or principles outlined in the RRLUS for achieving this vision include:

Agriculture:

- Water security;
- Minimal fragmentation;
- Efficient irrigation set up;
- Efficient infrastructure envelope (dwelling/shed location);
- Complementary infrastructure (roads, power etc); and
- Limit incompatible land uses/sensitive land uses – including tourism and non-farm housing.

Amenity living / hobby farming

- Close to existing residential areas;
- Good amenity – water views, undulating landscape;
- Buffer to agriculture;

- Efficient service provision;
- Protect landscape values;
- Requirements for tourism need to be recognised; and
- High amenity areas need to be well managed and the need to avoid areas with agricultural infrastructure such as hail guns, frost fans that are likely to compromise tourist operations but are also likely to lead to measures that will result in agricultural production being compromised.

2 Farming Zone

2.1 Background

The RRLUS recommended a suite of planning controls for the agricultural areas identified as: Growth – Farming Zone 1, Consolidation – Farming Zone 2, Niche – Farming Zone 3. The planning controls are summarised in Table 2-1.

Campaspe and Moira noted the following issues in relation to implementation of this suite of controls:

- The RRLUS provides limited justification for the recommended minimum lot size for dwellings in the Farming Zone 1 and 2 and no lot size minima were recommended for Farming Zone 3.
- The RRLUS recommended that no minimum lot size for subdivision be specified and that assessment of permits for subdivision should be performance-based.
- The RRLUS recommends different lot size minima for irrigated land and dryland. To implement this planning policy requires that the irrigation areas and dryland areas be mapped. Water trading, fluctuating water allocations and the Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) means that the location of irrigation and dryland will vary in the short and long term. An alternative approach is required to simplify the achievement of the land used outcomes.
- Identify other policy instruments required to achieve the strategic objectives and land use outcomes and support decision-making, particularly around dwellings, in the Farming Zone.

This section of the report will focus on addressing these issues.

Table 2-1 Summary of RRLUS planning policy recommendations for the Farming Zone

	Lot size minima	Subdivision	Re-subdivision – Boundary realignments	Excision	Dwellings	Ancillary tourism
FZ1	Irrigation : 100ha Dryland: 250ha	Performance based New/smaller lots rarely required	Yes – for restructure/consolidation purposes only	No – lack of neighbours is a key driver of growth	No – new dwellings are not required to support agriculture growth	No – potential for conflict
FZ2	Irrigated: 40ha Dryland 160ha	Performance based New smaller lots rarely required	Yes – for restructure/consolidation purposes only	Yes – where restructure is an outcome and subdivision can be designed to minimise neighbour impact	No – new dwellings are not required to support agriculture growth	No – potential for conflict
FZ3	None specified	Performance based New smaller lots rarely required	Yes – for restructure/consolidation purposes only	No – lots are generally of a size that will support small scale agriculture in their own right and a dwelling will be required to support this	Yes – where it can be demonstrated it is to support the productive use of the land consistent with the direction of the area	Yes – but carefully managed to prevent conflict and impact on agricultural operations

2.2 Objectives of setting lot size minima

The Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) requires Councils to set a minimum lot size for subdivision and a minimum lot size for dwellings below which a planning permit is required. If Councils choose not to specify a minimum lot size then a default setting of 40ha applies to both subdivision and dwellings.

Before seeking to determine what is an appropriate minimum lot size, it is worth clarifying the objectives of setting minimum lot sizes.

The purpose of setting a *minimum subdivision size* is to provide land parcels of appropriate size for farm growth and transfer between farming businesses, allow for adoption of efficient management and production practices and avoid fragmentation of rural land to ensure that the landscape remains viable for farming.

The purpose of setting a *minimum lot size below which a permit is required for a dwelling* is to afford Council the opportunity to assess whether a dwelling is genuinely required for the agricultural use of the land and to ensure that dwelling development does not compromise the agricultural future of the land.

2.3 Determining minimum lot sizes in the Farming Zone

The VPP Planning Practice Note: Applying the rural zones notes with respect to the Farming Zone that “*the minimum lot size for subdivision may be tailored to suit the farming practices and productivity of the land.*” The schedule to the Farming Zone allows municipalities to set a minimum lot size for subdivisions and dwellings that reflects the agricultural uses of the land.

There is no established methodology for determining the minimum lot size in rural areas and in reality the minimum lot size is often a translation of former outdated controls or is the State default of 40ha.

In the absence of guidance on determining a minimum lot size, the following considerations will be used for this study:

- An assessment of the Interim Planning Controls introduced during development of the RRLUS which saw the minimum lot size for subdivisions and dwellings in the Farming Zone set at 100ha on irrigated land and 250ha on dryland;
- A review of recent rural strategic work in other municipalities;
- An analysis of farm size and productive land units;
- Current pattern of lot and property sizes; and
- Land use outcomes to be achieved through the use of lot size minima.

2.3.1 Assessment of the Interim Planning Controls

In September 2008, the Minister for Planning approved introduction of Interim Planning Controls to the Moira and Campaspe Planning Schemes. The purpose of these controls was to limit subdivision potential and subsequent dwelling development within the Farming Zone whilst the RRLUS was on public display and during the planning amendment process. It was

felt that this would ensure that the effect of subdivision proposals did not compromise the long-term intent and regionally agreed direction of the RRLUS.

The Interim Planning Controls introduced lot size minima substantially higher than those in the planning schemes previously (Table 2-2). Comparison of planning permit approvals data for the three years prior to and the year following introduction of the Interim Planning Controls was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the controls in limiting subdivision and dwelling development.

Table 2-2 Lot size minima in the Farming Zone

Planning Scheme	Minimum lot size for Subdivision		Minimum lot size for which a permit is not required for a Dwelling	
Moira (Sep 2008)	GMID	20ha	GMID	20ha
	Cobram precinct	12ha	Cobram precinct	12ha
	Other land	40ha	Other rural land	40ha
Campaspe (Sep 2008)	Irrigation district	40ha	Irrigation district	40ha
	Other land	100ha	Other land	100ha
Interim controls (Oct 2009)	Irrigation	100ha	Irrigation	100ha
	Dryland	250ha	Dryland	250ha

Moira

In 2006, 2007 and 2008, preceding introduction of the Interim Planning Controls, 90, 100 and 102 planning permit applications for land in the Farming Zone were approved respectively. The applications were primarily for dwellings, subdivision, boundary realignments, re-subdivision and dwelling or house lot excisions.

In 2009, following introduction of the Interim Planning Controls, 68 planning permit applications were approved. A breakdown of the planning approvals by lot size and permit type is summarised in

Figure 2-1.

Campaspe

In 2006, 2007 and 2008 preceding introduction of the Interim Planning Controls, 91, 49, and 67 planning permit applications for and in the Farming Zone were approved respectively. The applications were primarily for dwellings, subdivision, boundary realignments, re-subdivision and dwelling or house lot excisions.

In 2009, following introduction of the Interim Planning Controls, 65 planning permit applications were approved. A breakdown of the approvals by permit type is summarised in Figure 2-2.

This comparison of permit approvals prior to and following introduction of the Interim Planning Controls in both municipalities indicates:

- Subdivision, boundary realignments and re-subdivision have been significantly reduced under the Interim Planning Controls.

- Planning permits for dwellings approved under the Interim Planning Controls is high relative to previous years. This is to be expected as the increased lot size minima of the Interim Planning Controls would trigger more planning permit applications for dwellings than in the past. This has meant that Council has had greater opportunity to scrutinise dwelling applications and ensure that they are consistent with land use objectives.
- The number of dwellings constructed 'as of right' i.e. without the need for a planning permit has been reduced by the Interim Planning Controls.

The comparison of planning approvals data before and after introduction of the Interim Planning Controls suggests that they have been effective in limiting subdivision and dwelling development.

Figure 2-1 Breakdown of Moira planning approvals by lot size and permit type, 2006 to 2009

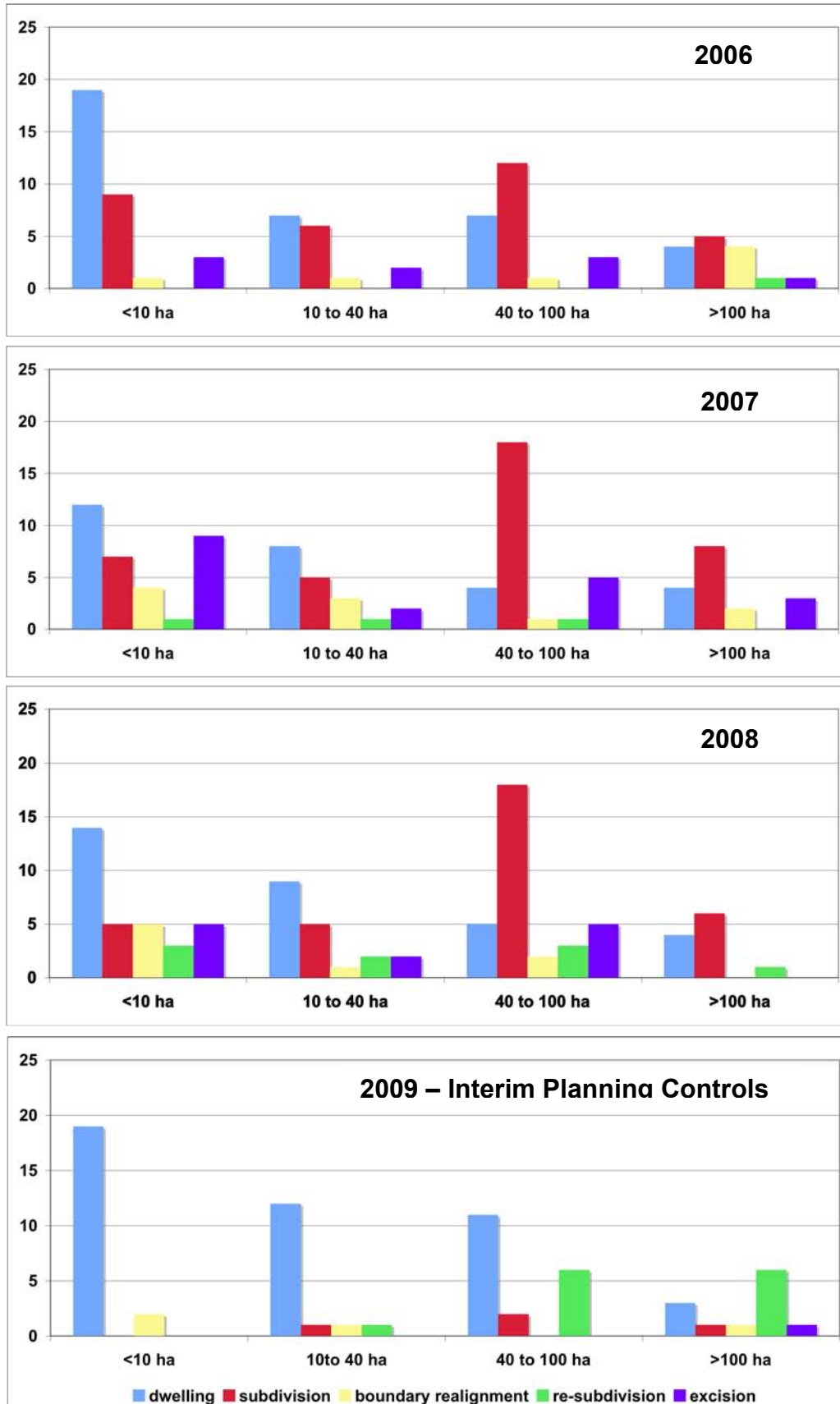
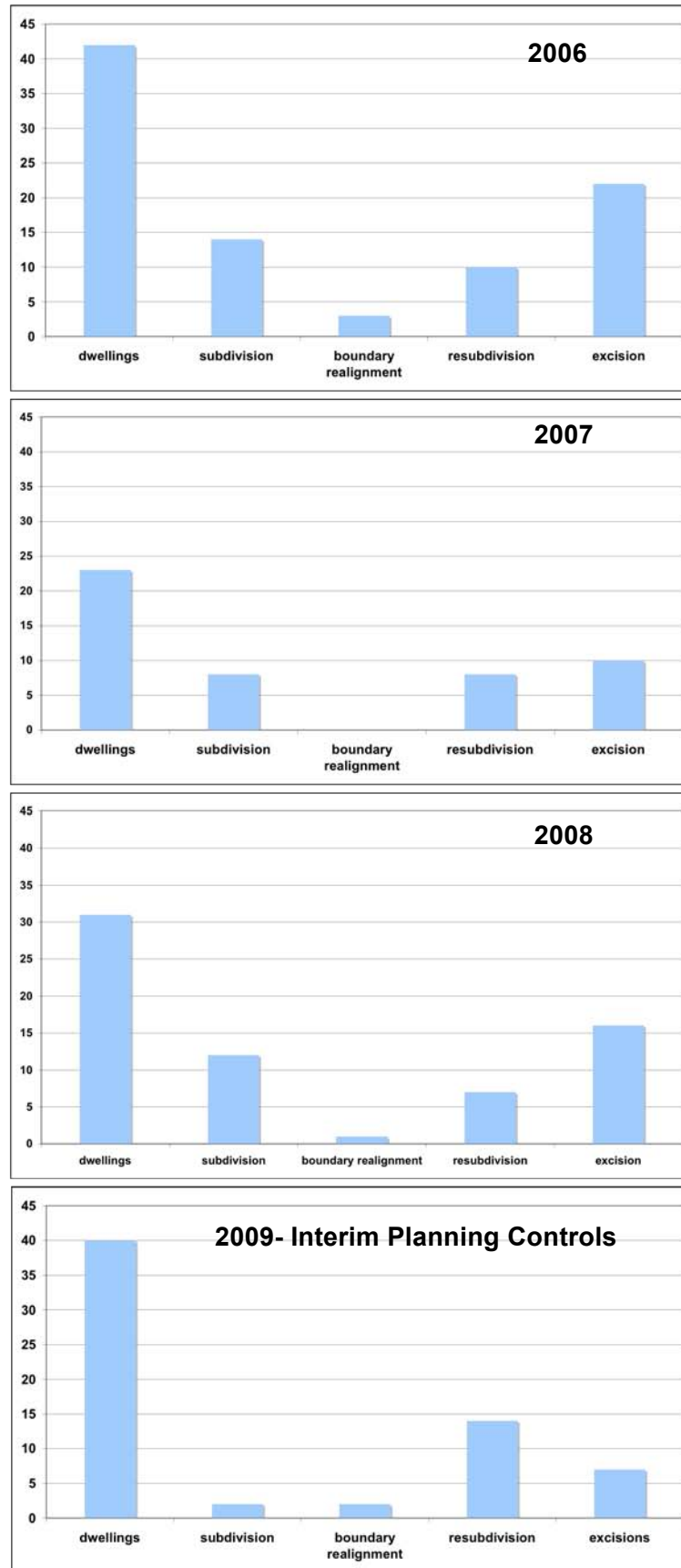


Figure 2-2 Breakdown of Campaspe planning approvals by permit type, 2006 to 2009



2.4 Recent rural strategic work

Since introduction of the suite of new rural zones in 2004, rural strategies have been completed, tested at Panel and implemented through the planning scheme by a number of municipalities. A review of this work was undertaken for this study. The strategic objectives and recommendations for lot size minima in the Farming Zone from these strategies is summarised in Table 2-3.

A range of lot sizes is recommended across the strategies and most strategies have more than one minimum lot size to reflect different land types. Except for Surf Coast, which has a tenement policy in the planning scheme, all strategies recommended a dwelling policy to provide further guidance on approving dwellings on lots below the minimum lot size.

It is considered however, that the recommendations of these strategies are not particularly relevant to Moira and Campaspe. None of the strategies reviewed were based on supporting an agricultural sector of State and National importance or had an irrigated agriculture sector. A strong focus of these strategies was maintaining the rural farmed landscape.

Table 2-3 Summary of rural strategic studies

LGA	Status of strategy	Objectives	Lot size Farming Zone Subdivision	Lot size Farming Zone Dwellings	Other policy instruments
Surf Coast	Adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To foster and encourage agriculture within the precinct. ▪ To value and enhance the picturesque nature of the rolling rural landscape. ▪ To ensure development is compatible to the landscape values and farming land uses of the area. 	80ha 60ha 40ha	Not applicable Tenement controls for dwellings	
Colac	Adopted Tested at panel Planning scheme amendment gazetted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide for agriculture 	80ha 40ha	80ha 40ha	Dwelling policy for rural areas
Greater Geelong	Adopted Tested at panel Planning scheme amendment gazetted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preserving agricultural land for current and future agricultural use ▪ Providing opportunities for agricultural activity ▪ Maintaining a farmed rural landscape as a setting for the urban areas 	80ha 40ha 30ha	80ha 40ha 30ha	Dwelling policy for rural areas
Golden Plains	Adopted Tested at panel Planning scheme amendment gazetted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support and promote productive and sustainable agriculture and rural enterprises ▪ Provide for planned rural residential and rural living development ▪ Provide for value adding rural industries, including intensive animal industries, where they can be sited so as to avoid conflicts and impacts ▪ Maintain the quality of the Shire's rural landscapes and the non-urban breaks between towns and settlements 	100ha	100ha	Intensive Animal Husbandry House Lot Excision

2.4.1 Farm size and productive land units

The minimum subdivision size should reflect a productive land unit – one that will allow farming properties to expand, for land parcels to be easily transferred between farming properties and avoid fragmentation of rural land to ensure that the landscape remains viable for farming and enable the use of efficient management and production practices. This section of the report attempts to quantify the size of a productive land unit.

Agriculture faces long term decline in terms of trade and farm businesses need to increase productivity or expand to remain viable, usually both. In the face of this decline, property sizes generally need to double every 20 years for farm businesses to remain viable into the future. (Alternatively they can seek off farm income or intensify production from the same land base).

If farming businesses cannot expand, then the enterprises must change to generate more income from the same area e.g. change production to higher value crops or look to value add. To double in size every 20 years, farms will need to expand on average by 5% per year. In reality most farms expand at higher percentages but every few years (e.g. 25% expansion every 5 years).

While individual cases and financial circumstances will differ, on average a viable farm needs to be able to generate at least \$300,000 gross sales to enable the farm to grow and undertake necessary succession. Different farming systems require different land areas to generate \$300,000 gross sales. For example a beef farm generating \$400/effective hectare will require around 750ha of land to generate \$300,000; a dairy farm generating \$1,500/effective hectare will require around 200ha. Some more intense agricultural industries, e.g. vegetables, will be able to conduct their activities on smaller holdings. For part time farms, supported as they are by off farm income, there is less emphasis on the need to have available land for expansion.

The farm size required to support a viable business and the area for 25% growth every 5 years for a range of enterprises is outlined in Table 2-4. A dairy farm may need to acquire 50ha every 5 years and a beef business, 190ha every 5 years.

This suggests that for broadacre activities, larger lots (>50ha) are preferred for expansion purposes. Smaller lots are preferred for intensive horticultural farms.

Table 2-4 Estimate of viable farm size and area for 25% growth

Enterprise	Average income/ha	Farm size (ha) to generate \$300,000	Area (ha) for 25% growth every 5 years
Dairy	\$1,500	200	50
Beef	\$400	750	190
Vegetables	\$10,000 - \$40,000	7 – 30	2 - 7
Fruit	\$5,000 - \$20,000	15 - 60	3 - 15

Note: These statistics represent a snapshot in time and are average figures only. There will be individual cases where income per hectare differs from these figures and where a viable farm generates more or less than \$300,000 gross sales. Note also that income/ha is dependant on a range of factors, which may vary significantly between any season and any farm. It does not necessarily equate to profit. This data has been collected from a range of industry sources including South West Monitor Project 2004-2005, Department of Primary Industry; Australian Dairy 2005: Production Systems, Productivity and Profit, Dairy Australia; Australian vegetable growing farms: an economic survey, 2007-07, Irrigation in the Murray-Darling Basin: Regional estimates of gross value of irrigated production in 2006-07.

2.4.2 Dryland versus irrigated land

The RRLUS recommended different lot size minima for irrigated land and dryland. Moira and Campaspe have noted difficulty in the practical application of this approach, as it will require land to be designated as either dryland or irrigated in the planning scheme. In the past, this could be achieved using irrigation district boundaries or the like. However, separation of water entitlements from land titles, water trade and the renewal of irrigation infrastructure are resulting in rapid change in land use inside and outside of irrigation districts.

The unbundling of water from land means that water is now a significant capital asset that can be traded on the water market. Over the last few years with low water allocations and high water prices, some farm businesses have elected to sell water (temporarily or permanently) as they can realise a greater return from the water market than from agricultural production. As a result land may not be irrigated every year or may be retired from irrigation for extended periods or permanently. Greenfield irrigation areas can be established in previously dryland areas and water traded back to land from which land had been permanently traded.

The Northern Victoria Irrigation Renewal Project (NVIRP) is a program of works that will modernise and upgrade irrigation infrastructure in northern Victoria. While the project will deliver water savings and improved irrigation efficiency for growers, implementation of the NVIRP will see some rationalisation of redundant or under-utilised irrigation infrastructure and a reduced public irrigation infrastructure footprint.

Conversely, the NVIRP will also create opportunities for improving irrigation efficiency on existing farms and for some previously dryland areas to be newly developed for irrigation such as the prime development zones identified in Section 4.4.2 of the RRLUS.

In the longer term, the total volume of water available for irrigation in Moira and Campaspe will be impacted by Federal Government policy to secure water supplies and provide a greater allocation to environmental assets. Major policy initiatives include *Restoring the Balance in the Murray-Darling Basin* to purchase water entitlements and the *Murray Darling Basin Plan*, due in 2011. The combined effect of these measures will be a reduction in water available for irrigation and create further uncertainty as to the location of irrigation activity in the future.

It is therefore concluded that lot size minima that distinguish between irrigated and non-irrigated land are not workable.

2.4.3 Current pattern of property sizes

Property size data in the RRLUS (Section 5.2) indicates that there is already a substantial supply of small properties in the Farming Zone in both municipalities. In Campaspe, 67% of properties in the Farming Zone are less than 40ha and in Moira 57% are less than 40ha. The breakdown by lot size from data supplied by Campaspe and Moira is shown in Figure 2-3 and Figure 2-4 respectively.

The subdivision pattern in both municipalities reflects the 'living area' rule of thumb used to establish the irrigation districts and dryland areas as part of soldier settler schemes or irrigation development schemes. The living area of a horticultural block was generally

around 40 acres (16ha) and 100 acres (40ha) for dairy. Dryland areas were substantially larger.

Over time the 'living area' has increased and consequently most properties are multi-lot tenements. The breakdown of property sizes from data supplied by Campaspe and Moira shows that there are fewer properties compared to the total number of lots (Figure 2-5 and Figure 2-6).

Mapping by Campaspe and Moira of parcels, properties and aggregated billing address clearly confirms that most farms in Campaspe and Moira are multi-lot tenements comprising a number of lots held either contiguously or non-contiguously (Figure 2-7, Figure 2-8, Figure 2-9, Figure 2-10, Figure 2-11). In view of the substantial supply of small lots in the Farming Zone and the trend in multi-lot tenements, there is little argument for creation of further smaller lots and where possible, consolidation of lots should be encouraged and existing larger lots retained. There is a case for subdivision to apply to very large lots, greater than 100ha to facilitate land transfer between farm businesses and succession.

Figure 2-3 Number of parcels by size range in Campaspe

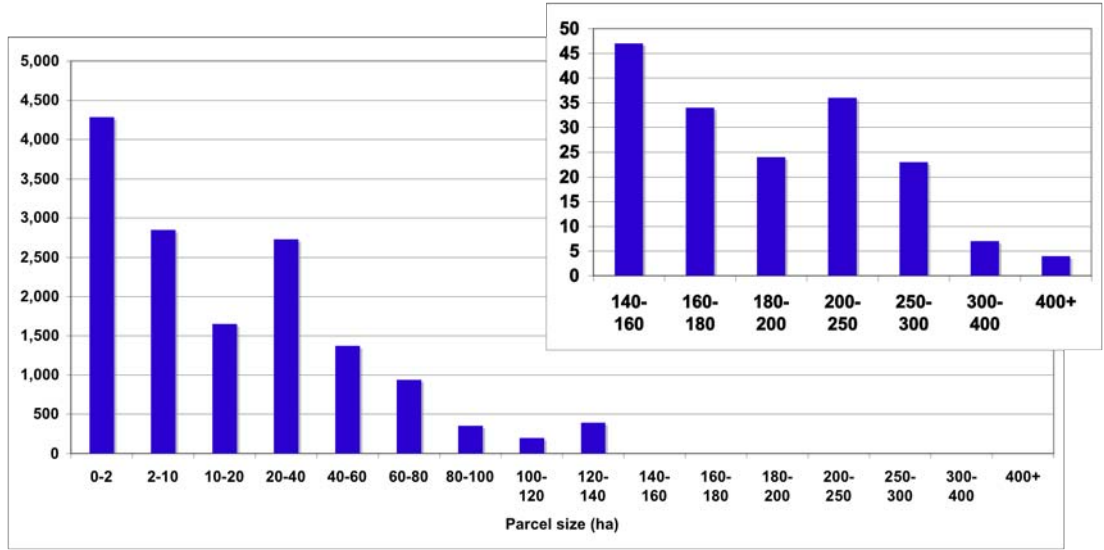


Figure 2-4 Number of parcels by size range in Moira

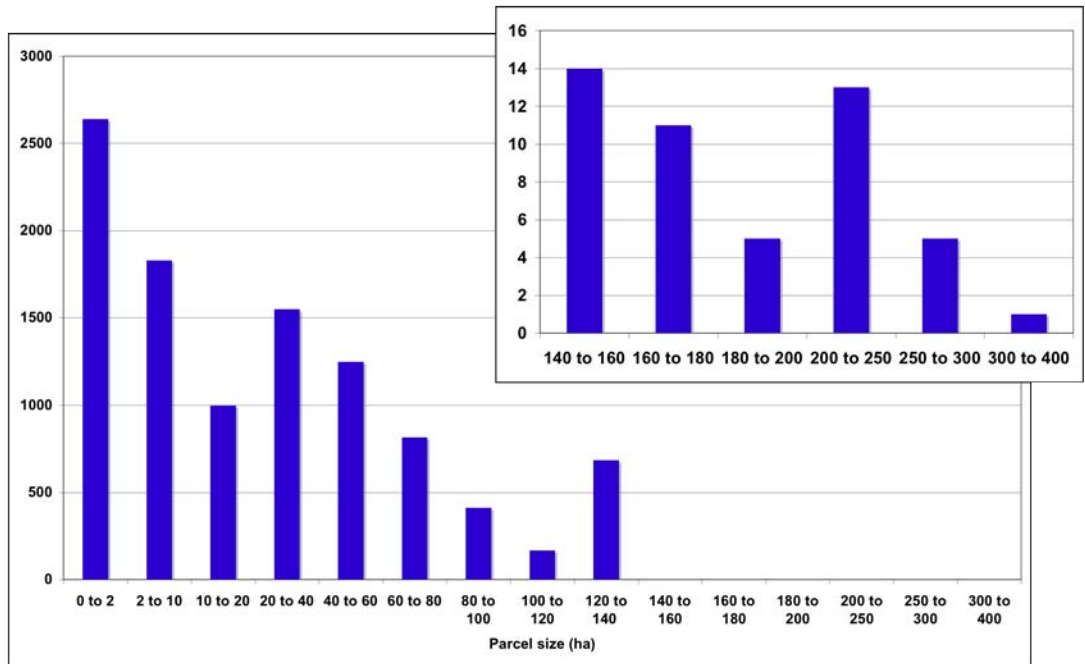


Figure 2-5 Numbers of properties by size range in Campaspe

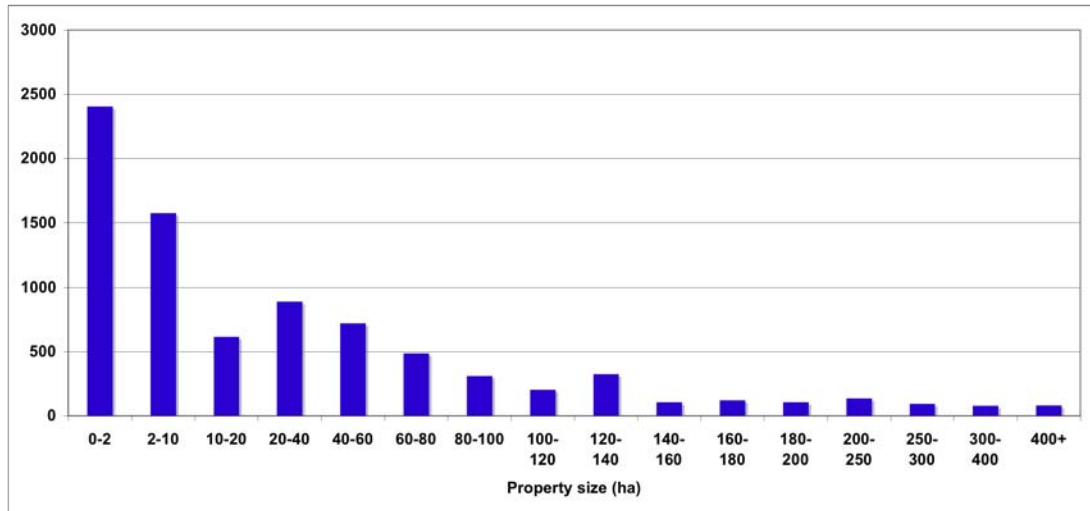


Figure 2-6 Number of properties by size range in Moira

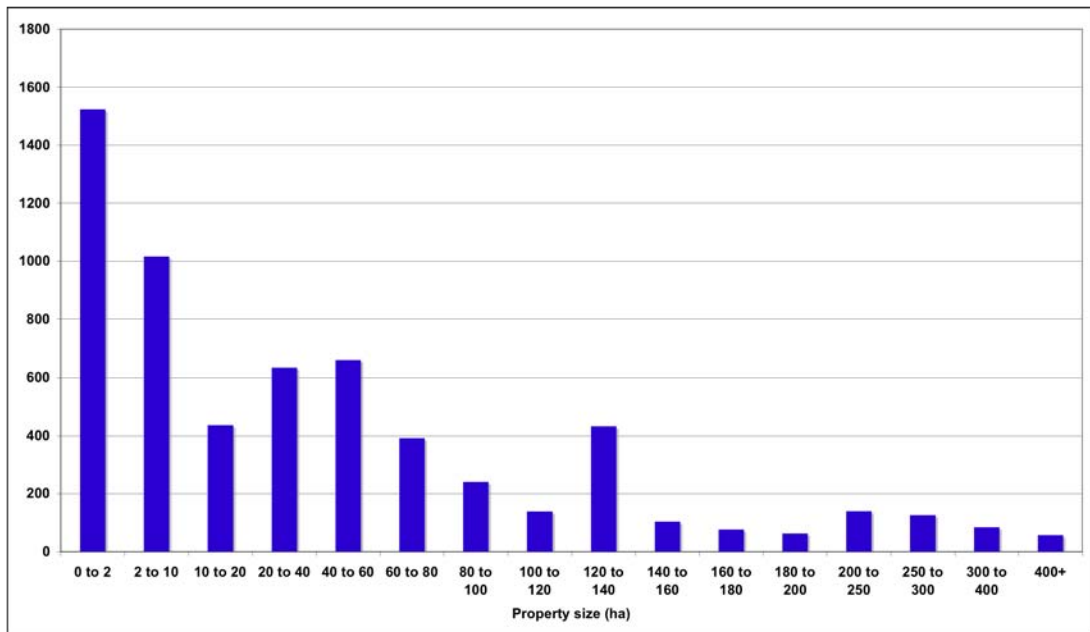


Figure 2-7 Parcel size in Campaspe

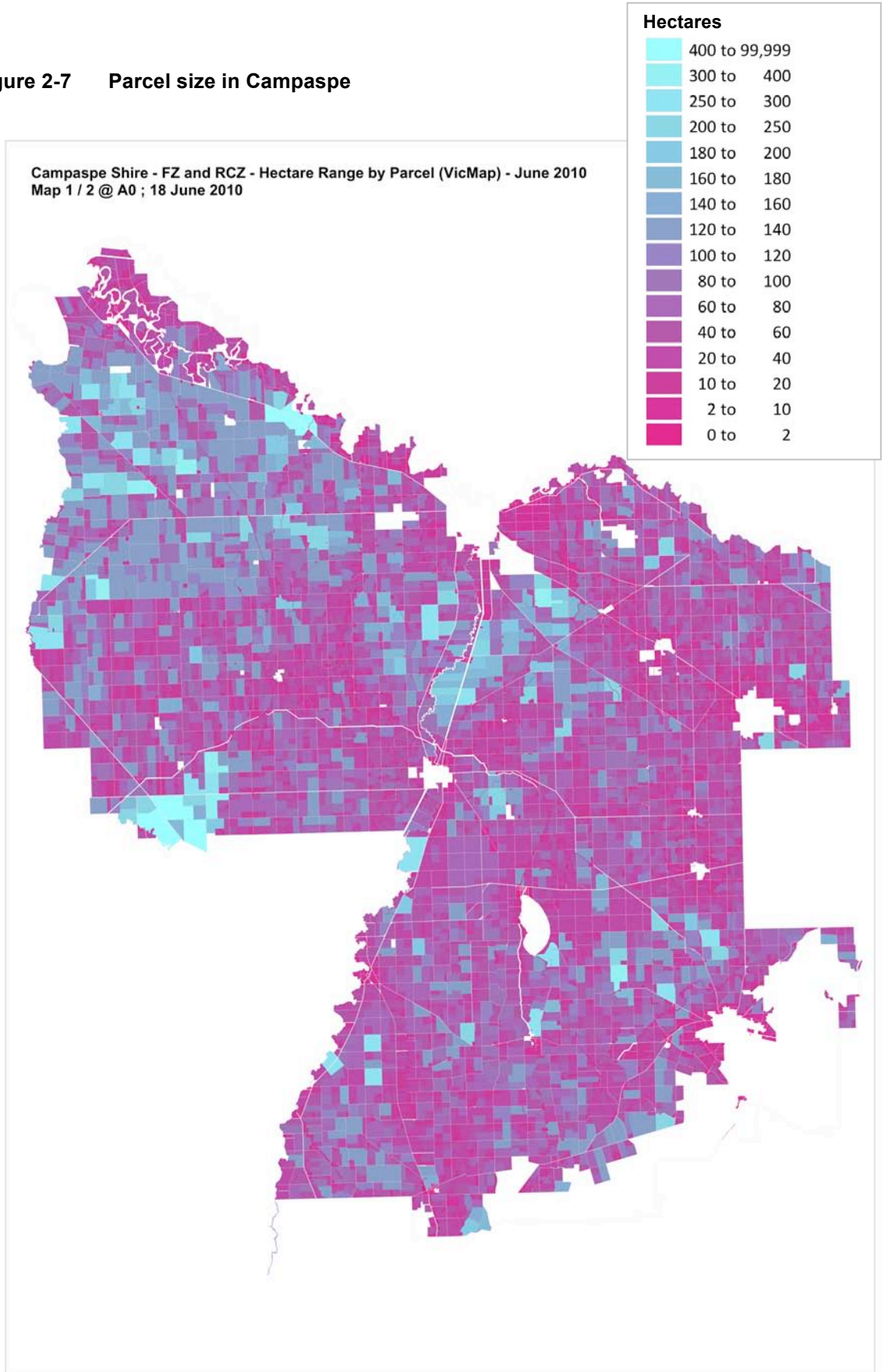


Figure 2-8 Property size in Campaspe

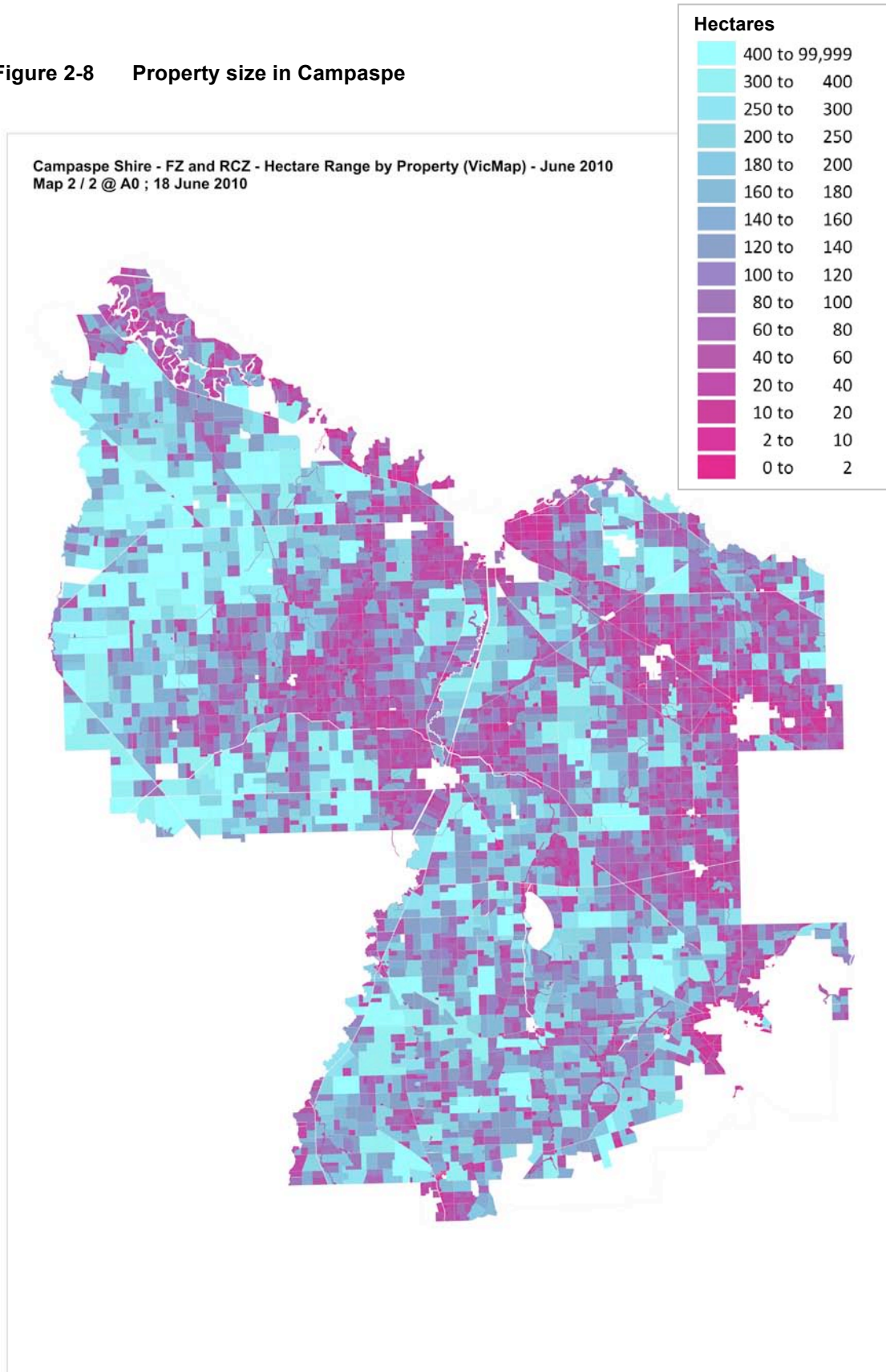


Figure 2-9 Parcel sizes in Moira

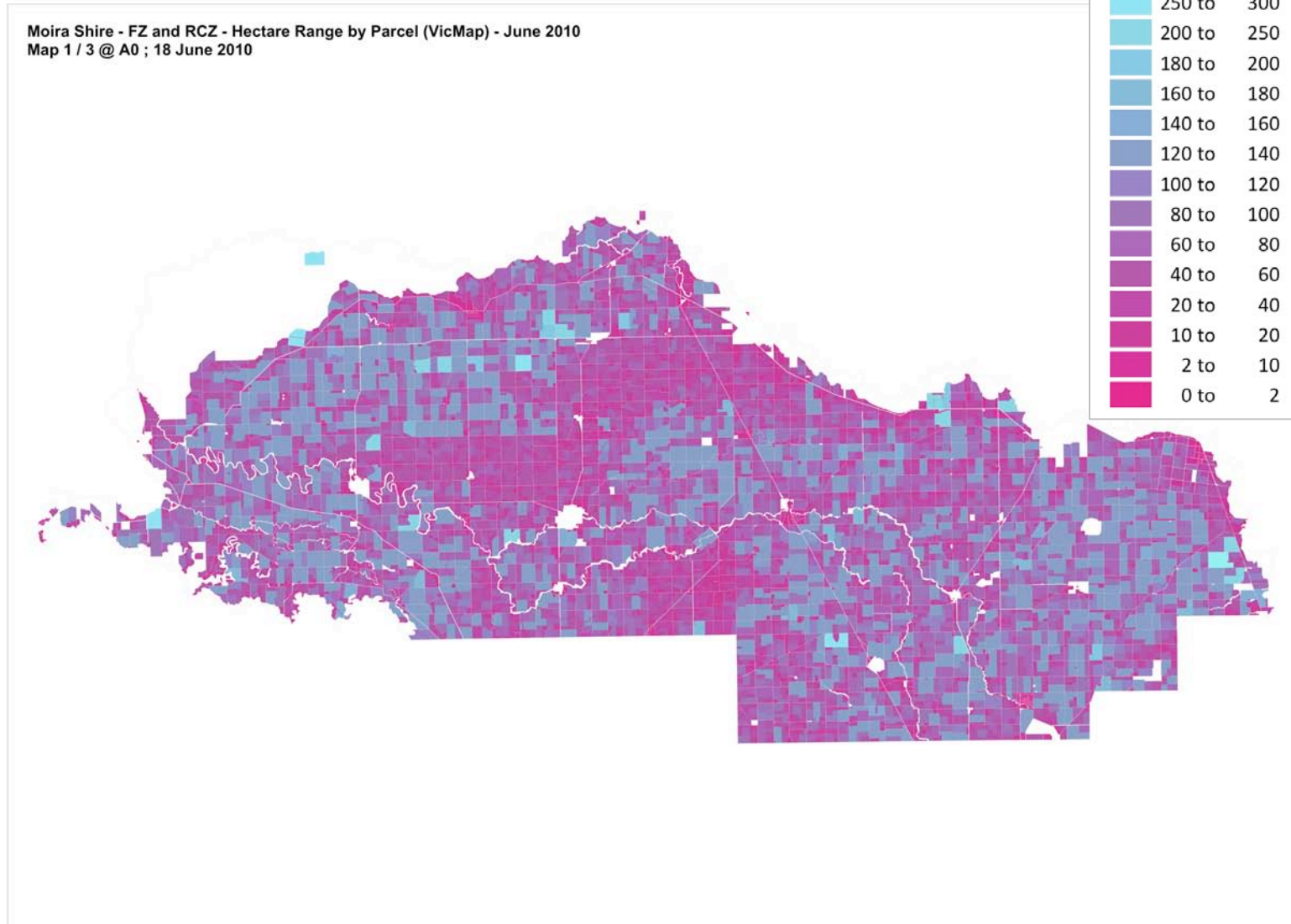


Figure 2-10 Property size in Moira

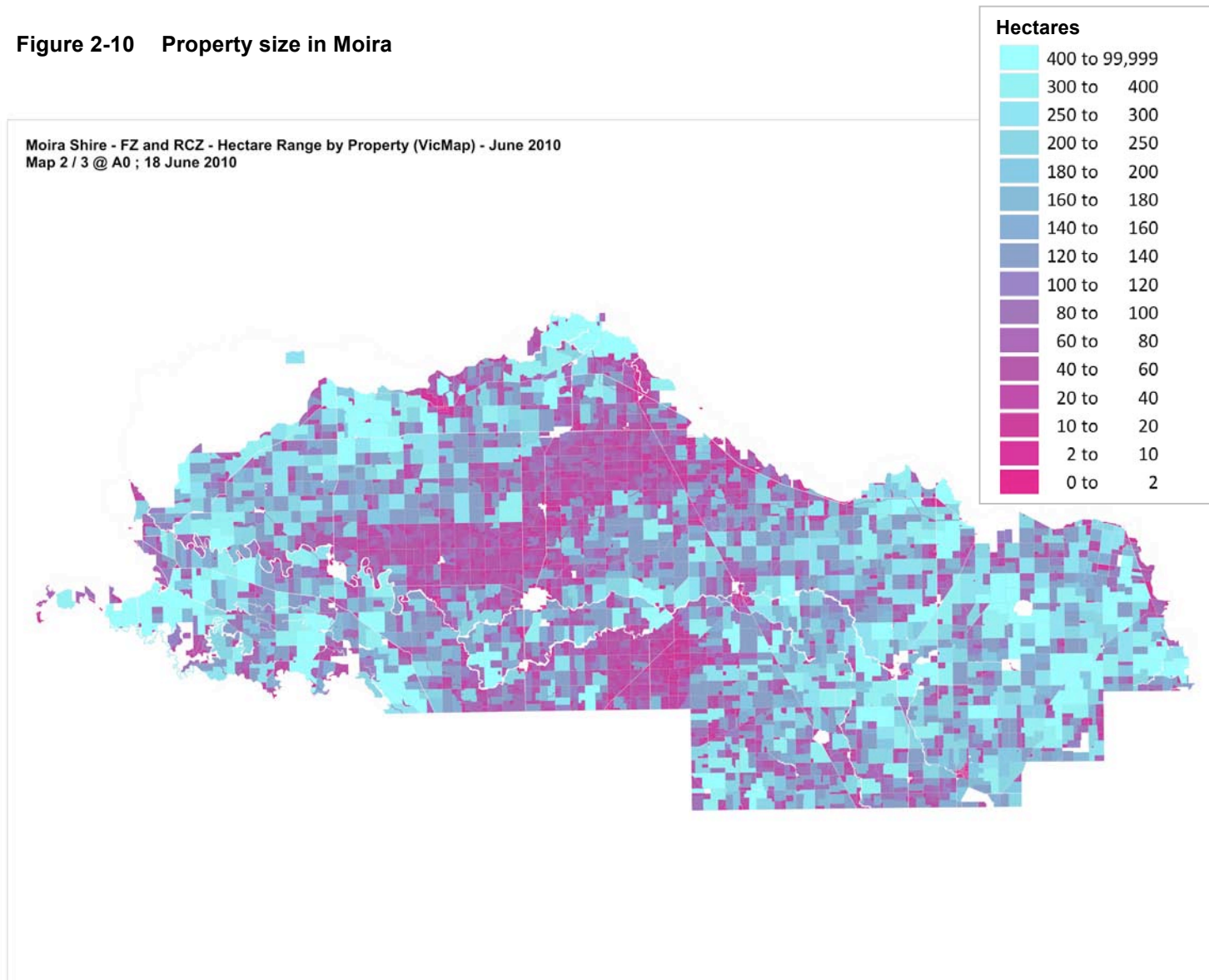
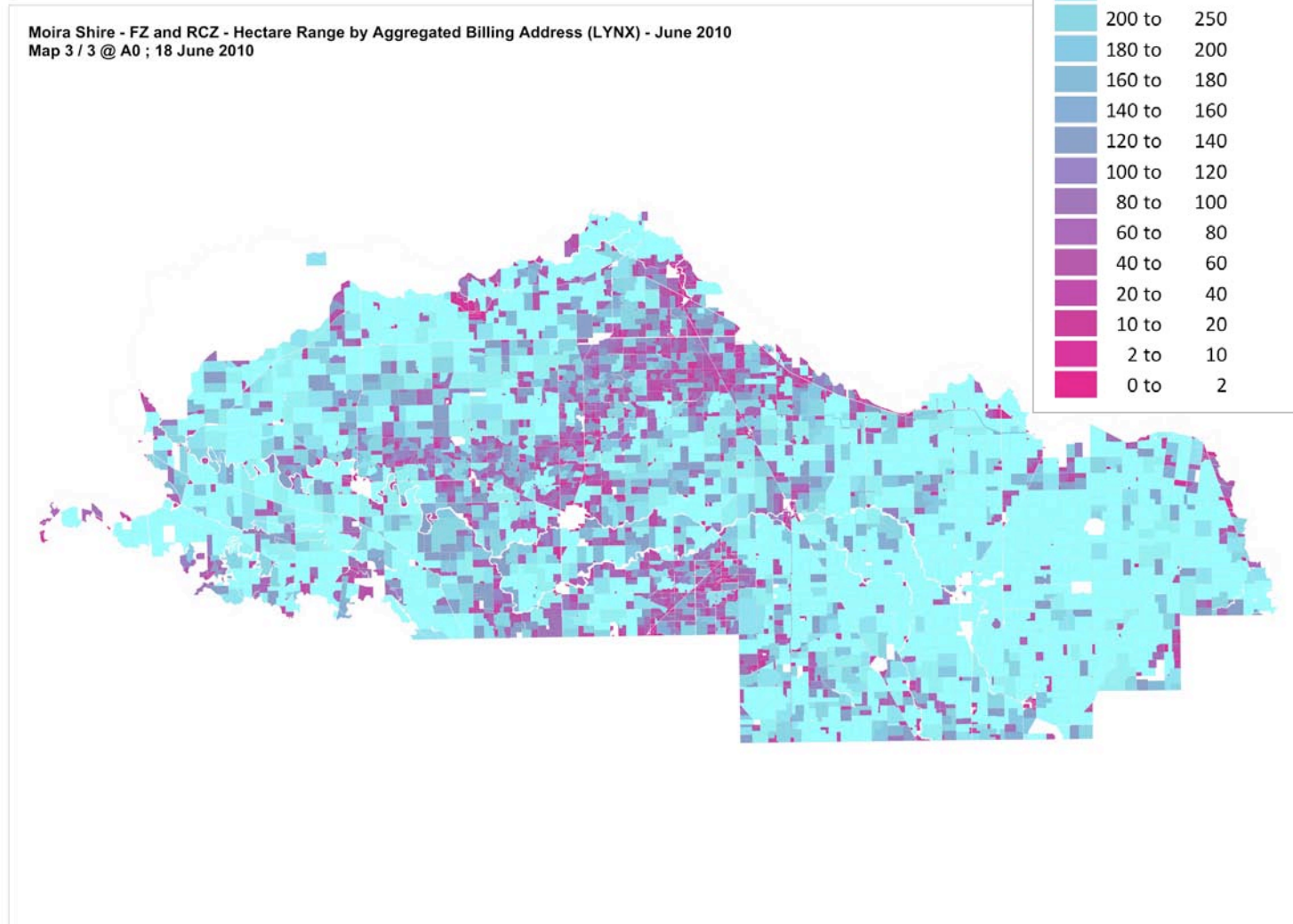


Figure 2-11 Aggregated billing address in Moira



2.4.4 Land use outcomes

The RRLUS set out clear land use outcomes to be achieved through the planning controls, these include:

Farming Zone 1, Growth – areas for growth and expansion of existing farm businesses and for new investment

- Strongly discourage establishment of dwellings not associated or required for the agricultural use of the land;
- Encourage consolidation of lots;
- Limit subdivision as new or smaller lots will rarely be required;
- Discourage land uses and development that would compromise the future agricultural use of the land, including farm related tourism; and
- Excisions should be discourage to avoid rural residential outcomes and non-agricultural neighbours.

Farming Zone 2, Consolidation – areas for support for existing farm businesses to operate and grow

- Strongly discourage establishment of dwellings not associated or required for the agricultural use of the land;
- Encourage consolidation of lots;
- Limit subdivision as new or smaller lots will rarely be required;
- Discourage land uses and development that would compromise the future agricultural use of the land, including farm related tourism; and
- Excisions will be provided for where restructure is an outcome and designed to minimise neighbour impact.

Farming Zone 3, Niche – productive potential on existing lot configuration; opportunity for smaller scale and specialised agriculture

- Provide for dwellings where it can be demonstrated it is to support the productive use of the land consistent with the direction for the area;
- Limit subdivision as new or smaller lots will rarely be required;
- Excisions should be discouraged as lots will be generally already be of a small size that are capable of supporting agriculture in their own right and a dwelling will be required to support this; and
- Ancillary tourism will be accommodated but carefully managed to prevent conflict and impact on agricultural operations.

2.5 Minimum lot size recommendations

The findings from the minimum lot size considerations include:

- The Interim Planning Controls have significantly reduced subdivision of land and increased Council assessment of dwelling applications. The lot sizes specified in the

Interim Planning Controls - 100ha for irrigated land and 250ha for dryland are a useful benchmark for achieving the desired land use outcomes;

- A productive land unit for broadacre irrigated agriculture such as dairy is around 50ha and less than 20ha for intensive horticulture. There is a substantial supply of lots less than 100ha, most of which are located in irrigated areas, which can meet the requirement for more intensive agricultural uses. It is not considered necessary to create more lots less than 100ha;
- A productive land unit for broadacre dryland agriculture is around 180ha. There are a small number of very large lots, predominantly in dryland areas that would be more attractive for transfer between farm businesses if they were smaller. Therefore, a minimum lot size for subdivision should provide for subdivision of these larger lots to a size attractive for broadacre agriculture;
- Irrigation districts will be less defined than in the past and lot size minima that differentiate between irrigated land and dryland will be impractical;
- The review of the land use outcomes, indicate that lot size minima should aim to:
 - Facilitate farm growth and expansion
 - Prevent proliferation of dwellings not associated with agriculture
 - Maintain land in parcels with productive and management potential
 - Recognise that most farm units are comprised of multiple lots; and
- In order to break the nexus between subdivision and dwellings and in recognition of dash point 4, it is recommended that different lot size minima be specified for subdivision and dwellings. In most cases, the minimum lot size below which a permit is required for a dwelling will be substantially higher than the minimum lot size for subdivision.

Subdivision

The purpose of specifying a lot size minimum for subdivision in the Farming Zone is to enable the transfer of land parcels between farm businesses for growth and succession purposes as well as retaining land in lots sufficiently large enough to enable landowners to own and use equipment necessary for efficient management of the farm. Based on these objectives and the findings of the minimum lot size considerations, the following minimum subdivision sizes are recommended

<p>Minimum lot size for subdivision:</p> <p>Farming Zone 1 – 100ha</p> <p>Farming Zone 2 – 100ha</p> <p>Farming Zone 3 – 40ha</p>
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Dwellings

The purpose of the minimum lot size below which a permit is required for a dwelling is to afford Council the opportunity to assess whether a dwelling is genuinely required for the agricultural use of the land and to ensure that dwelling development does not compromise

the agricultural future of the land. Based on these objectives and findings of the minimum lot size considerations, the following minimum lot sizes below which a permit is required for a dwelling are recommended

Minimum lot size for which no permit is required for a dwelling:

Farming Zone 1 – 250ha

Farming Zone 2 – 250ha

Farming Zone 3 – 40ha

Note that this does not prohibit dwellings on lots below this minimum but will require that a landowner demonstrate the need for a dwelling.

In line with the land use outcomes for Farming Zone 1 and Farming Zone 2, dwellings will generally not be supported on lots below the minimum lot size for a dwelling. Where an applicant is able to overwhelmingly demonstrate the need for a dwelling on a lot below 250ha, a set of criteria and local policy are required to assist decision-making in these circumstances. These are outlined in Section 2.6.

2.6 Other policy recommendations for the Farming Zone

2.6.1 Rural subdivision policy

The RRLUS strategic objectives and outcomes are clearly focused on providing for agriculture. The Farming Zone does provide for exceptions for the subdivision of land into lots less than specified in the schedule, namely through excision or boundary realignments. In both cases, and for applications for dwellings below the lot size minimum, the Farming Zone specifies the matters that must be considered by Council in determining to grant a permit or not. These matters include:

- Whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production.
- Whether the use or development will permanently remove land from agricultural production.
- The potential for the use or development to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.
- The capacity of the site to sustain the agricultural use.
- The agricultural qualities of the land, such as soil quality, access to water and access to rural infrastructure.
- Whether the dwelling will result in the loss or fragmentation of productive agricultural land.
- Whether the dwelling is reasonably required for the operation of the agricultural activity conducted on the land.
- Whether the dwelling will be adversely affected by agricultural activities on adjacent and nearby land due to dust, noise, odour, use of chemicals and farm machinery, traffic and hours of operation.

- Whether the dwelling will adversely affect the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses.
- The potential for the proposal to lead to a concentration or proliferation of dwellings in the area and the impact of this on the use of the land for agriculture.

In addition to the decision guidelines in the Farming Zone, Moira and Campaspe have local policy to provide further guidance on attitudes to applications that might be lodged for dwellings, excisions or boundary realignments.

With consistency in planning matters a key objective for undertaking the RRLUS, it is recommended that a standard set of policy be prepared to provide guidance on rural subdivision and housing.

These policies should focus on achieving the following objectives:

Farming Zone 1

- To limit the further fragmentation of rural land by subdivision;
- To ensure that lots resulting from subdivision are of a sufficient size to be of benefit to agricultural production;
- To encourage the consolidation of rural lots;
- To strongly discourage excisions;
- To strongly discourage new dwellings unless it can be overwhelmingly demonstrated that it is required for the agricultural use of the land; and
- To provide a consistent basis for considering planning permit applications for the subdivision of rural land.

Farming Zone 2

- To limit the further fragmentation of rural land by subdivision;
- To ensure that lots resulting from subdivision are of a sufficient size to be of benefit to agricultural production;
- To encourage the consolidation of rural lots.
- To provide for excisions where restructure is an outcome and off site impacts can be minimised;
- To ensure that excision does not result in the cumulative impact of house lot excisions, including serial small lot subdivisions;
- To ensure that house lot excisions are undertaken for legitimate reasons related to agriculture;
- To strongly discourage new dwellings unless it can be overwhelmingly demonstrated that it is required for the agricultural use of the land; and
- To provide a consistent basis for considering planning permit applications for the subdivision of rural land.

Farming Zone 3

- To limit the further fragmentation of rural land by subdivision;
- To ensure that lots resulting from subdivision are of a sufficient size to be of benefit to agricultural production;
- To encourage the consolidation of rural lots;
- To provide for excisions where restructure is an outcome and off site impacts can be minimised;
- To ensure that excision does not result in the cumulative impact of house lot excisions, including serial small lot subdivisions;
- To ensure that house lot excisions are undertaken for legitimate reasons related to agriculture; and
- To provide for new dwellings but only where it can be overwhelmingly demonstrated that it is required for the agricultural use of the land.

It also recommended that a set of criteria or guidelines is developed to assist Council and land owners to determine the circumstances in which a dwelling is '*overwhelmingly required for agriculture.*'

2.7 Other Farming Zone Issues

2.7.1 Echuca Village

The RRLUS recommended that land between the Echuca town boundary and a Restructure Overlay at Echuca Village is Farming Zone 1. Campaspe has requested that this area be reviewed in further detail. Mapping provided by Campaspe shows the lot size, dwelling development and ownership of property in the area (Figure 2-12 and Figure 2-13). This indicates that the settlement pattern and lot size in the north is more consistent with niche agriculture, as defined in the RRLUS and in the south to transition agriculture, Farming Zone 2.

Figure 2-12 Lot sizes and dwelling development, Echuca Village

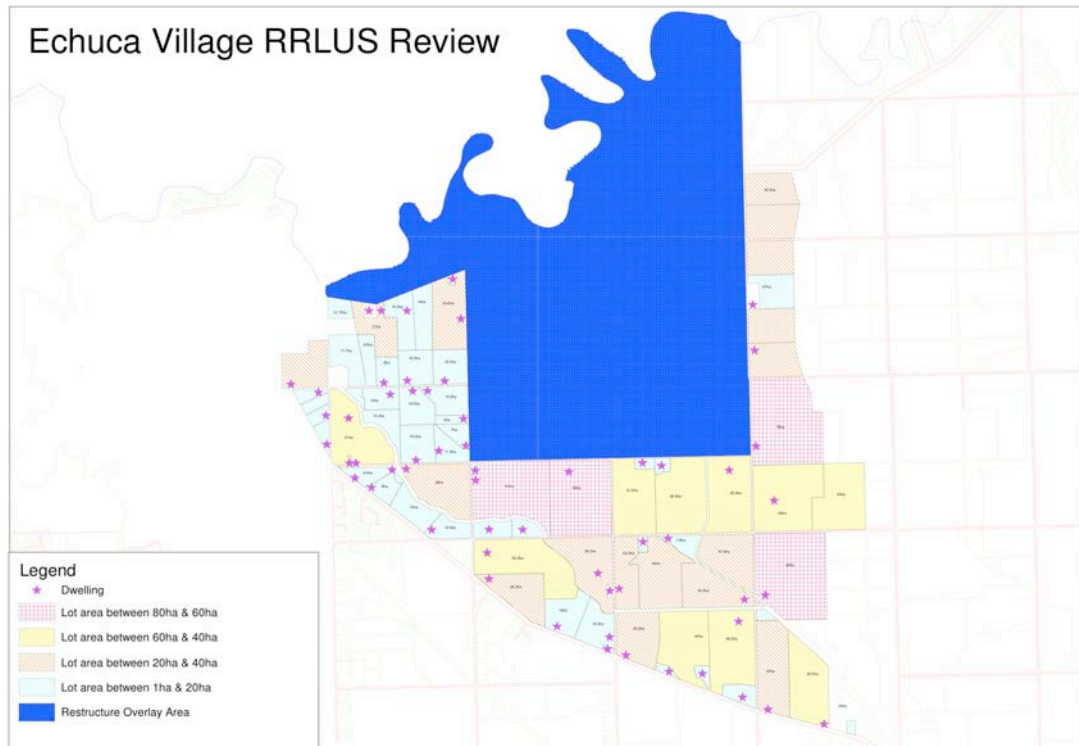
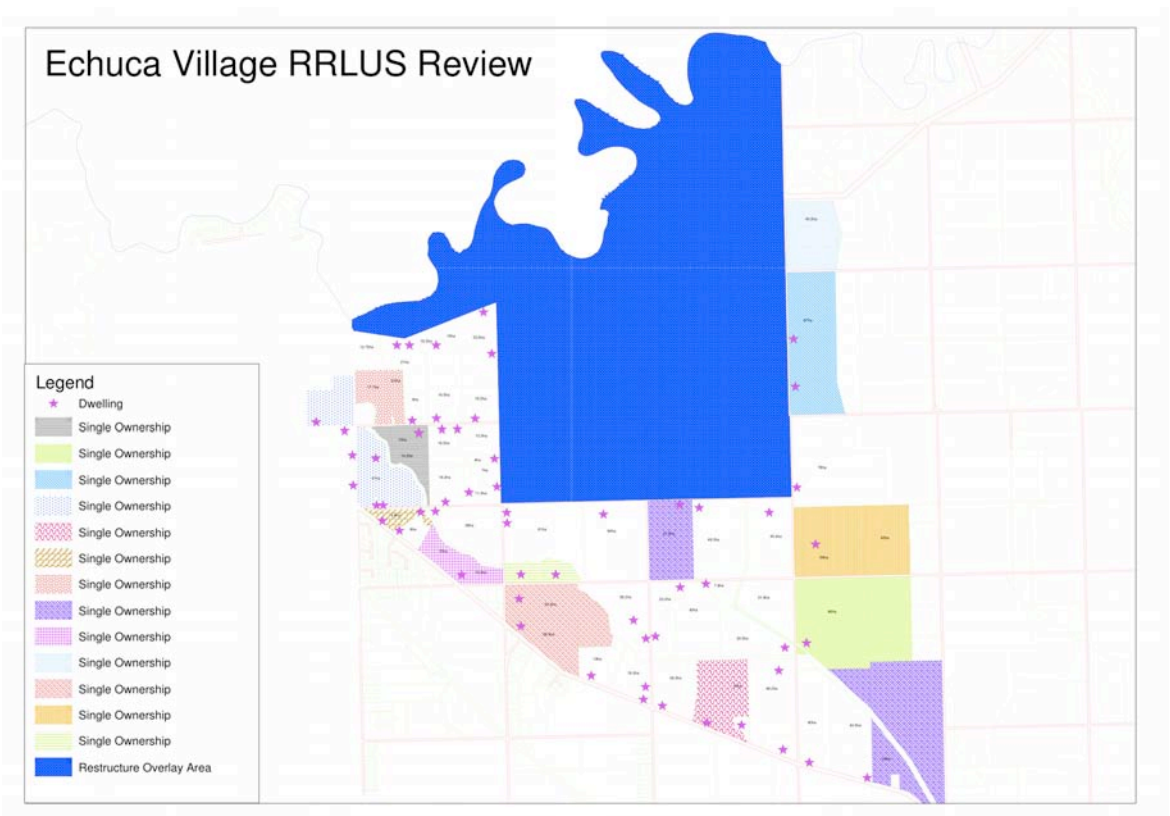
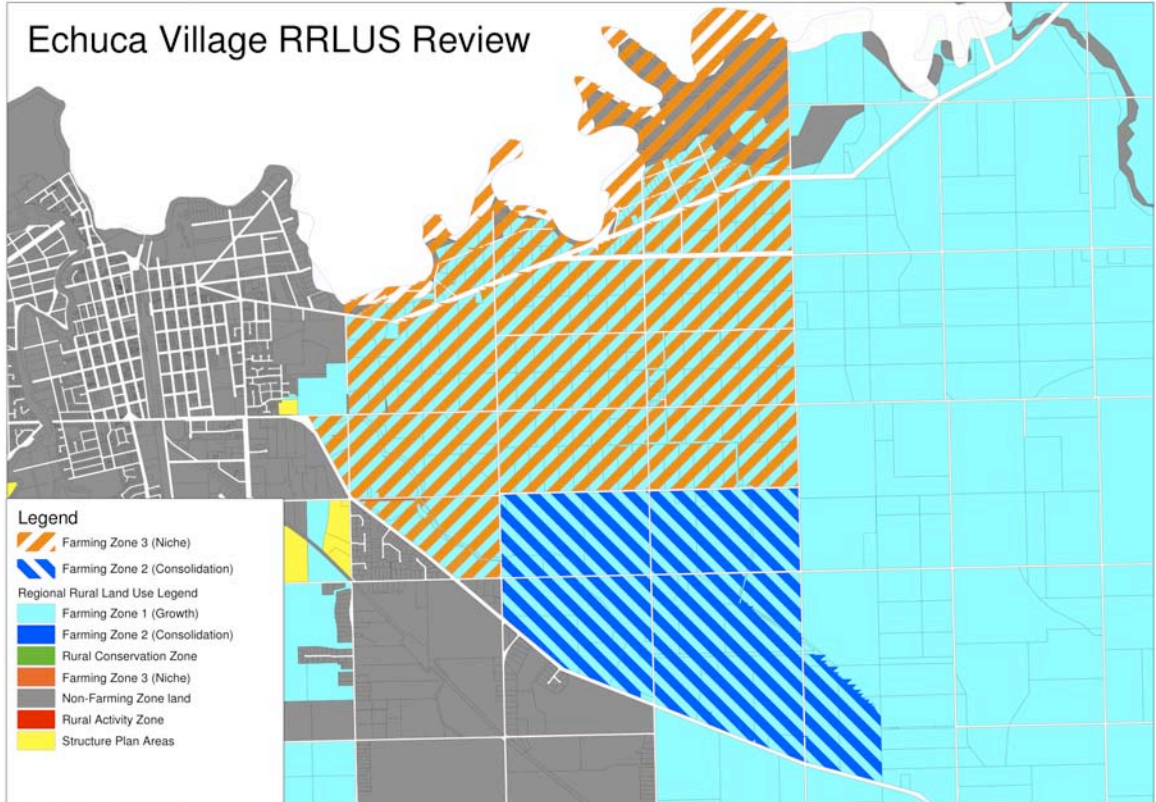


Figure 2-13 Property ownership, Echuca Village



It is recommended therefore that rather than being zoned Farming Zone 1, these areas be rezoned Farming Zone 2 and Farming Zone 3 as shown in Figure 2-14.

Figure 2-14 Alternative Farming Zone for Echuca Village



3 Tourism

3.1 Introduction

The RRLUS made recommendations for application of the Rural Activity Zone to provide opportunities for rural tourism:

“The region contains a number of key tourism attractions that deliver significant economic benefit. These key attractions include the Murray River, in particular at Echuca and Lake Mulwala at Yarrawonga. In addition a number of forested landscapes such as near Rushworth and Murchison exhibit important landscape values.”

The RRLUS noted in relation to these areas that:

- These areas were found to have significant tourism value.
- They are compromised for agricultural use due to existing development patterns such as smaller lots and dwellings, which limits expansion opportunities and restricts operating conditions.
- Any change in land use should be carefully managed to ensure that the environment and landscape features are protected.

The RRLUS nominated land at the following locations for application of the Rural Activity Zone (refer to Map 7 of the RRLUS):

- West of Echuca
- South of Cobram
- West of Yarrawonga

The RRLUS noted that these areas required more detailed review. Campaspe and Moira have noted the need for more detailed assessment of these and other areas to provide a more robust justification for application of the Rural Activity Zone.

This section of the report provides the detailed assessment of these and other areas of both Shires for application of the Rural Activity Zone. The assessment will be based on criteria drawn from:

- The Campaspe and Moira Planning Schemes
- Relevant tourism strategies
- The Zone definition
- Planning Practice Note for Application of the Rural Zones
- RRLUS strategic directions

Appropriate lot size minima and accompanying policy will be recommended based on the strategic objectives and the land use outcomes to be achieved in the Rural Activity Zone areas.

3.2 Campaspe Planning Scheme

Sections of the Campaspe Planning Scheme relevant to tourism are summarised here.

3.2.1 State Planning Policy Framework

CI 17.04 Tourism

17.04-1 Objective

To encourage tourism development to maximise the employment and long-term economic, social and cultural benefits of developing the State as a competitive domestic and international tourist destination.

17.04-2 General implementation

Planning and responsible authorities should encourage the development of a range of well-designed and sited tourist facilities, including integrated resorts, motel accommodation and smaller scale operations such as host farm, bed and breakfast and retail opportunities. Facilities should have access to suitable transport and be compatible with and build upon the assets and qualities of surrounding urban or rural activities and cultural and natural attractions.

Responsible authorities should use the Planning and Building Tourism from Concept to Reality: Guidelines for Planning and Developing Tourism Projects in Victoria (Tourism Victoria, 2000) in considering applications for tourist development.

17.04-3 Geographic strategies

Planning and responsible authorities should have regard to any relevant regional tourism development strategy.

3.2.2 Local Planning Policy Framework

CI 21.01 Municipal profile

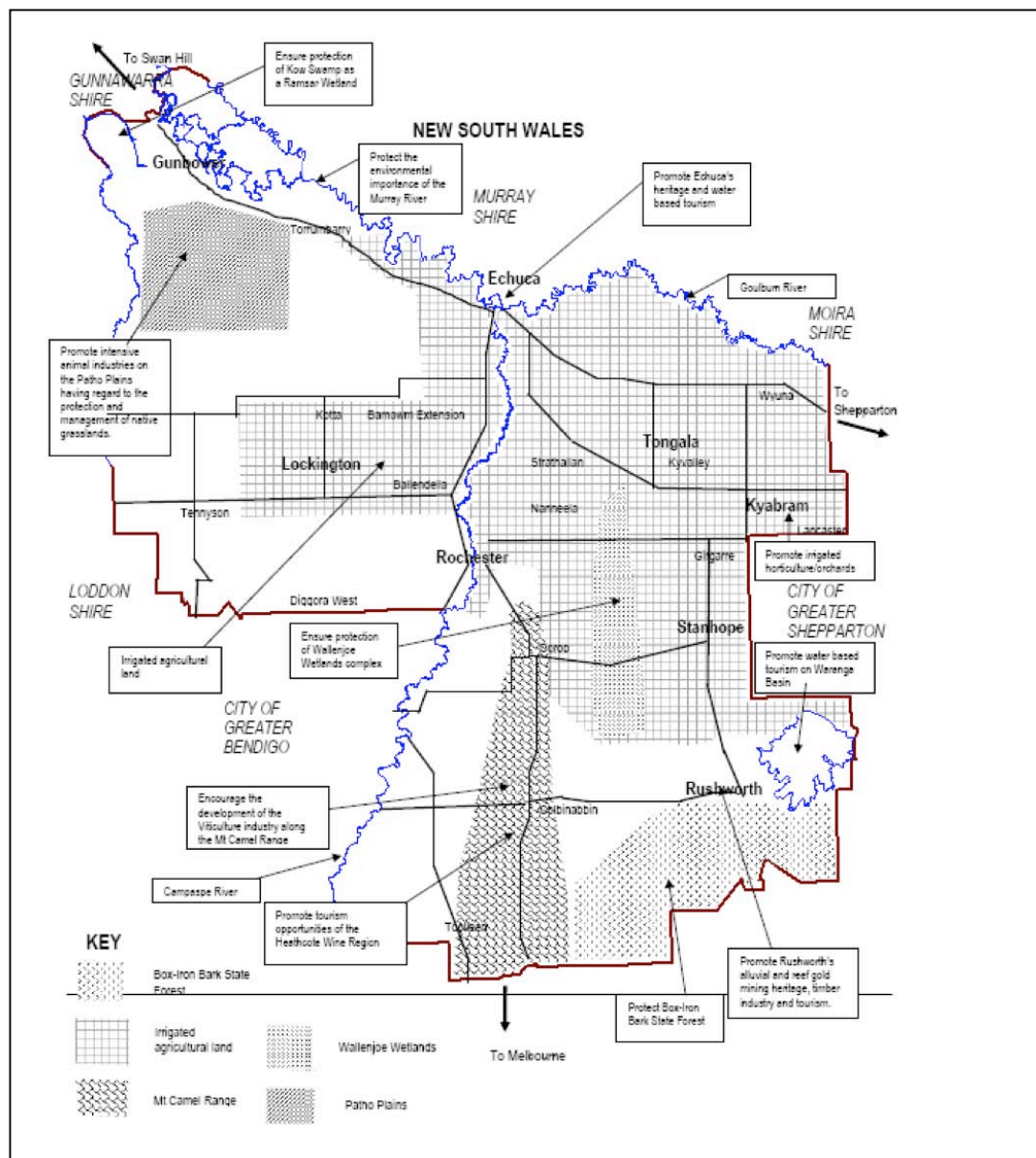
Tourism is an economic and employment growth sector for the Shire and is an important aspect of the social, economic and physical make up of the Shire. The key tourism assets of the Shire are based on the Murray River, the Port of Echuca, River Boats, Native Forests, Historic Buildings, the Kyabram Fauna Park and local tourist attractions. The Port of Echuca because of its heritage values is recognised as the 'anchor' tourist attraction in the region.

CI 21.02 Key influences

- Tourism is an economic and employment growth sector for the Shire and is an important aspect of the social, economic and physical make up of the Shire.
- Key tourism assets of the Shire are based on the Murray River, the Port of Echuca, River Boats, Native Forests, Historic Buildings, the Kyabram Fauna Park and local tourist attractions.

CI 21.03 Vision statement

Figure 3-1 Shire of Campaspe Physical Framework Plan



21.04-3 Economic Development

Tourism

The key tourism assets of the Shire are based on the Murray River, the Port of Echuca, River Boats, Native Forests, Historic Buildings, the Kyabram Fauna Park and local tourist attractions. The estimated annual turnover associated with the tourism industry is \$100million not including the multiplier effect associated with tourism activity. The tourism industry in the Shire employs approximately 1,500 people.

Tourism is an economic and employment growth sector for the Shire and is an important aspect of the social, economic and physical make up of the Shire. Council encourages the development of new tourist attractions and services throughout the Shire to complement the existing tourist enterprises and further the economic well being of the community through the creation of employment opportunities and wealth. Using the natural features of the Shire, eco-tourism provides significant opportunities. Gold-based tourism for the southern part of the Shire is significant. Fostering co-operation with adjoining municipalities is considered important.

Objectives - Tourism

- To broaden the range of segments of the tourism market that may be attracted to the Shire.
- To enhance the Port of Echuca as a nationally significant heritage tourism precinct.
- To protect the heritage character and integrity of the historic port and environs.
- To create a multi-layered tourism experience, including activities specific to the particular attractions and recreational features of Echuca and the region. This includes boating, fishing, golfing and other like activities.
- To consolidate the port precinct as a well serviced tourism centre including alternative accommodation types and improved entertainment and services.
- To recognise red gum forests on both private and public land as potential tourism attractions.

Strategies- Tourism

- Promote the Port of Echuca as the “anchor” tourist destination in the Shire
- Identify key development sites in the Port of Echuca for preferred uses
- Implement the recommendations of the Echuca Heritage Precinct Master Plan
- Promote heritage related tourism for Rushworth and environs.
- Promote natural features such as the Murray River and other water courses as tourist destinations in an environmentally sustainable manner
- Promote Kyabram Fauna Park as significant tourism destination.

Further strategic work

Investigate the application of the Rural Activity Zone depending on the outcomes of the Rural Strategy.

3.2.3 Strategic Considerations

The Shire’s planning framework outlines the importance of tourism to the local economy and objectives to broaden the range of tourism products including building on natural advantages such as the red gum forests. Further strategic work was identified to investigate application of the Rural Activity Zone for rural based tourism.

3.3 Moira Planning Scheme

3.3.1 State Planning Policy Framework

CI17.04 Tourism

As for Campaspe

3.3.2 Local Planning Policy Framework

CI 21.01 Municipal profile

The tourism industry is a growing contributor to the Shire's economy. The industry is based on the natural features of the Shire, particularly the Murray, Goulburn and Ovens Rivers and the Barmah Forest.

CI21.02 Vision for Moira

Council has identified in its Community Plan that its visions are underpinned by the following:

- Employment opportunities in Moira will be dominated by the agricultural, industrial and tourism resources of the municipality.
- Economic growth of the Shire is based on its natural assets, raw and value-added agriculture, tourism, recreation, retirement and small business development combined with access to new technology.

21.05 Economic development

21.05-1 Key Issues and Challenges

The key planning issues and challenges facing the Moira Shire relating to economic development include:

- Enhancing the growth, development and diversification of the Shire's Tourism industry while ensuring the long-term protection and viability of the Shire's natural assets.

Tourism

Tourism in the Shire is dependent upon the protection and enhancement of a number of key natural assets, such as the Murray, Goulburn and Ovens Rivers as well as the Barmah Forest. The dominant role of Yarrawonga as a tourist town needs to be recognised and promoted.

Tourism development needs to be enhanced in order to multiply the expenditure benefits tourism brings to the municipality. It will be of paramount importance that any development does not jeopardise the long-term viability of the Shire's natural assets.

21.05-3 Economic development objectives

- To encourage the growth of the tourism industry throughout the municipality;

21.05-4 Economic development strategies

- Encourage a variety of business, tourism and industry developments throughout the municipality that do not pose a threat to the natural attributes and economic drivers of the Shire.

3.3.3 Strategic Considerations

The Shire's planning framework identifies tourism as a key economic driver and seeks to support a range of tourism products based around its natural attributes without compromising their long term viability or economic viability.

3.4 Tourism Strategies and Plans

Tourism Victoria has prepared a range of strategies and action plans aimed at promoting and increasing the tourism industry across Victoria. The strategies relevant to this project have been summarised.

Tourism Victoria 10 Year Tourism and Events Industry Strategy (2006)

This strategy noted the importance of tourism to regional economies and employment:

"Tourism is a major creator of businesses, jobs and prosperity in regional Victoria. In 2003/04, Tourism contributed \$3.4 billion to the regional Victorian economy – 31% of the State's total tourism output – and employed 61,000 people – 39% of the State's total tourism employment.

Intrastate tourists spend 85% of visitor nights in regional Victoria, providing a steady stream of income to regional tourism operators. New developments, however, are reducing the market share of regional tourism. Low cost carriers, for instance, are making it easier and less expensive for tourists to travel interstate and even overseas for their holidays."

A key initiative of this strategy for regional tourism has been the preparation of Regional Tourism Development Plans to promote a Destination Management approach to regional tourism. The plans contain recommendations to improve local tourism marketing, infrastructure and industry development.

Regional Tourism Action Plan (2009 – 2012)

The Regional Tourism Action Plan consolidates and refines Tourism Victoria's activities in regional Victoria and outlines actions to respond to the various challenges impacting on tourism growth in regional Victoria.

For the Murray Region, the Strategy notes:

"The Murray has strong primary industries such as horticulture and viticulture sectors while cereal, cattle and wool are productive in the dryland areas. Growing tourism, wine, agroforestry and olive oil industries complement the region's reputation for quality food and wine.

The Regional Awareness and Perceptions Study 2007 found there was no one clear attribute identified for the region however, the most prominent association with the Murray was golf, ahead of history and heritage and food and wine.”

The major opportunities for tourism development identified for the Murray included:

- Improving industry understanding of how it can leverage The Murray River Wind Down campaign
- Gaining a united vision across state tourism organisations
- Realising new and refreshed infrastructure along the Murray River
- Consideration of outcomes from Victorian Environmental Assessment Council recommendations

The strategy noted that Tourism Victoria would work with State Government agencies, the Regional Tourism Board, Local Government, investors and industry to facilitate the following priority projects:

- High quality accommodation with large capacity integrated with a regional conference facility (Mildura, Wodonga and Yarrawonga).
- Nature-based infrastructure and investment product along the Murray River, including consideration of a river trail with appointed visitor accommodation (similar to the Great Ocean Walk model).
- Tourism infrastructure and product to support the Port of Echuca as a heritage port and Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement.
- Implementation of the Mildura Riverfront Master Plan to create a riverside tourism precinct that integrates the Mildura CBD with the Murray River and marina.
- Completion of Bonegilla Migrant Centre experience.

Backpacker Tourism Action Plan (2009 – 2013)

This action plan noted that there is strong potential for regional Victoria to grow its share of backpacker tourism however, there are a number of issues that need to be addressed before that potential can be realised. These include issues with accessibility, suitability of product and improving consumer awareness of regional experiences and destinations.

The strategy aims to:

- Improve the quantity and quality of backpacker facilities in regional Victoria, particularly accommodation and activities.
- Encourage backpacker operators in regional Victoria to work together to better package products in their destination and to diversify their product offerings.
- Work with transport operators to service new backpacker destinations within Victoria.
- Highlight self-drive options for backpackers in regional Victoria.
- Promote the unique tourism experiences and work and volunteer opportunities available to backpackers in regional Victoria, using the concept of hubs.
- Leverage regional brand campaigns by incorporating appropriate elements into activities for backpackers.

Victoria's Food and Wine Plan (2004-2007)

The estimated annual value of Victoria's food industry is \$16 billion and the industry employs over 50,000 people. Winery tourism was valued at \$412 million in 2002, representing a 5% increase from 2000. The Food and Wine Plan aims to:

- Increase yield (visitor numbers, length of stay and expenditure) from food and wine tourism.
- Increase visitor satisfaction with Victoria's food and wine tourism experiences.
- Increase interstate and intrastate awareness of the quality, diversity and accessibility of Victoria's wine regions and food and wine tourism experiences.
- Further develop the natural synergy between food and wine and achieve the consistent integration of food as part of the winery tourism experience.
- Achieve wider regional and seasonal dispersal of food and wine tourism.
- Encourage ongoing training, education and accreditation of operators and employees to deliver outstanding hospitality experiences.
- Increase and strengthen cooperative alliances between key stakeholders.
- Increase and strengthen cooperative alliances between wineries, restaurants, farm gates and other local and regional tourism products and services.
- Raise the international profile and recognition of Melbourne's culinary experiences.

Fifty-one percent of visitors to the Murray Region partake in food and wine activities, above the total regional Victoria figure of 48%.

The Tourism Murray River Slow River Food and Wine Tourism Development Program is a tri-state initiative designed to promote food and wine along the entire length of the Murray. The Chefs of the Murray program uses the region's chefs and their signature dishes to showcase the food and wine strengths of the region.

Agri-tourism is a niche market that could be of value to the Murray region because of its agricultural and food processing industries. The broader Shepparton area is well positioned to develop this strength.

Victoria's Golf Tourism Action Plan (2009 – 2012)

Regional Victoria has experienced considerable growth in new golf course infrastructure over the past ten years. The Murray region is a long established golfing destination and offers domestic golf visitors a variety of golfing experiences.

Tourism Victoria has worked with regional golfing destinations and golf courses over the past five years to raise the profile of regional golf offerings.

Victoria's Nature-Based Tourism Strategy (2008 – 2012)

Nature based tourism is a relatively new and emerging sector of the tourism market. The strategy identified the following nature based tourism attractions in the Murray Region:

- Victoria's Outback

- Murray River
- Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Ned's Corner - private conservation land
- Red gum wetlands
- Mungo National Park (New South Wales)
- Barmah State Park
- Barmah State Forest (including Dharnya Centre)
- Murray River Reserve
- Nyah
- Vinifera State Forests*

The types of activities included:

- Water-based adventure
- 4WD
- Ecotourism (including Bird watching and Aboriginal cultural heritage)
- Extractive tourism (fishing)
- Nature retreats

The strategy identified that the Rural Land-Use Planning Program will need to more effectively respond to nature-based tourism issues and priorities, including providing guidance about what constitutes 'appropriate areas' in order to make strategic decisions that balance agricultural production and nature-based tourism activities.

It also noted that the new rural zones should be better applied to provide for nature-based tourism. In particular more use needs to be made of the Rural Activity Zone in places where larger scale nature-based tourism development is appropriate, beyond the level and type of accommodation provided under the Farming Zone.

3.4.1 Strategic Considerations

State Government through Tourism Victoria is supporting growth and development of tourism in the State's rural and regional areas. Opportunities for tourism development relevant to this study include:

- Golf based tourism building on existing facilities
- History and heritage
- Food and wine
- Murray River and associated natural environments
- High quality accommodation with large capacity integrated with a regional conference facility at Yarrawonga
- Nature based infrastructure along the Murray River
- Agri-tourism

- Ecotourism – bird watching, Aboriginal cultural heritage, nature retreats,

3.5 Strategic direction –Tourism

Based on the review of the planning schemes and relevant tourism plans and strategies the following strategic direction is provided for tourism in Moira and Campaspe.

Tourism is an important economic sector within Moira and Campaspe and traditionally has focused on historical attractions, such as the Port of Echuca, water based activities on the Murray River and Lake Mulwala and golfing facilities in adjacent New South Wales towns. Tourism in Moira and Campaspe is broadening its focus and seeks to capitalise on the environmental and landscape values of the Murray River and the food and wine industry associated with agriculture.

Tourist facilities in the farming areas of the Shire should generally be of a small-scale that will not compromise the agricultural use of the land. They should also be of a nature and sited to avoid conflict with existing rural uses, preserve the rural landscapes and environmental values, avoid loss of high quality agricultural land, and be in close proximity to existing townships. Tourism facilities should generally be discouraged from the prime farming areas, particularly in areas with an open rural landscape.

It is the recommendation of this report that there is an opportunity to accommodate modest scale tourism in appropriate rural locations facilitated via the application of the Rural Activity Zone.

Strategic objectives

Strategic objectives to be achieved include:

- Provide for growth in rural based tourism that complements existing agricultural production and tourism

Strategies

- Ensure that the land is retained in parcels suitable for agriculture
- Avoid the proliferation of housing on small lots
- Encourage uses directly related to and that will introduce conflict with agriculture
- Ensure that the siting of dwellings and other developments do not detract from the rural landscape and avoid environmental risks
- Prevent ribbon development along major highways and access roads to towns
- Avoid compromising efficiency gains from modernisation of irrigation infrastructure
- Protect environmental values

Directions

Apply the Rural Activity Zone to suitable areas to provide for a range of tourism uses that cannot be accommodated in the Farming Zone.

3.6 Rural Activity Zone definition

The stated purposes of the **Rural Activity Zone** as set out in the Victoria Planning Provisions are:

- To implement the SPPF and the LPPF, including the MSS and local planning policies
- To provide for the use of land for agriculture
- To provide for other uses and development, in appropriate locations, which are compatible with agriculture and the environmental and landscape characteristics of the area
- To ensure that use and development does not adversely affect surrounding land uses
- To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision

3.7 Planning Practice Note: Applying the rural zones

The Planning Practice Note: Applying the rural zones (2006), notes that the Rural Activity Zone is designed to be applied to areas where:

- Farming is a primary activity in the area but the planning objectives identified for the land support the establishment of other land uses.
- A mixed use function would support farming in the area, assist in preventing the unplanned loss of productive agricultural land elsewhere, or allow the logical and efficient provision of infrastructure.
- The use of land in the area for non-farming purposes would not compromise the long term productivity of surrounding farmland.
- Appropriate buffers can be provided between different land uses so that land use conflicts are avoided.

Possible Rural Activity Zone areas include:

- An existing mixed use rural area where the mix of uses complements the agricultural, environmental and landscape values of the area and supports Council's urban settlement objectives.
- Rural areas where commercial, tourism or recreation development will complement and benefit the particular agricultural pursuits, landscape features or natural attractions of the area.
- Farming areas where use and complementary rural industry, agribusiness uses, and rural research facilities are encouraged.
- Areas where use and development needs to be strictly controlled so that potential land use conflicts can be avoided.

In deciding to apply the Rural Activity Zone to facilitate tourism in an area, matters to be considered include:

- The need to protect the agricultural, environmental and cultural values of the area

- The scale and mix of tourism and recreation uses to be encouraged
- Whether there are opportunities to build alliances between tourism business operators, farmers, food and wine producers and trail network managers
- The product and infrastructure needs of tourists and the local community
- Requirements for the siting, planning and design of tourism facilities

3.8 Criteria for identifying areas for application of the Rural Activity Zone

To identify areas for application of the Rural Activity Zone, criteria for assessment of land are required. Criteria for identifying areas for application of the Rural Activity Zone seek to ensure that application of the Rural Activity Zone is consistent with the direction provided by the Planning Practice Note and objectives of the RRLUS.

The tables below outline the derivation of the criteria from the Practice Note and the RRLUS Objectives.

Planning Practice Note Direction	Considerations	Criteria or Land Attribute for Evaluation
Existing mixed uses that complement agriculture, environmental and landscape values	Consider areas where there are existing rural based tourism facilities	Existing land use
Supports Councils urban settlement objectives	Avoid isolated development; Consider areas close to existing settlements	Proximity to existing townships
Commercial tourism will complement agricultural pursuits, landscape features or natural attractions	Consider areas significant landscape values and proximity to parks, reserves and the coast	Vegetation Proximity and accessibility to the Murray River
Avoid land use conflicts	Consider areas generally used for lifestyle purposes and avoid areas used for primary production	Existing use

RRLUS Objectives - Agriculture	Considerations	Criteria or Land Attribute Evaluation
Water security	Avoid areas targeted for renewal of irrigation infrastructure Avoid area areas used for primary production	Proximity to NVIRP backbone Existing land use
Minimal fragmentation	Direct rural-based tourism towards areas that are already fragmented and have a compromised future for primary production Avoid areas with high quality agricultural land	Existing land use Settlement pattern Lot size Agricultural land quality
Efficient irrigation set up	Avoid land used for primary production Avoid land with potential for new irrigation development	Existing land use Proximity to NVIRP backbone Settlement pattern Lot size
Efficient infrastructure envelope	Direct rural-based tourism towards areas that are already fragmented and have a compromised future for primary production	Existing land use Settlement pattern Lot size
Complementary infrastructure (power, roads)	Avoid areas with major packing/processing facilities	Existing land use

RRLUS Objectives - Agriculture	Considerations	Criteria or Land Attribute Evaluation
	Direct rural-based tourism towards areas have road infrastructure to minimise conflict with agricultural transport such as dairy trucks	
Limit incompatible uses	Direct rural-based tourism towards areas that are already fragmented and have a compromised future for primary production Direct rural based tourism to areas generally used for lifestyle purposes	Existing land use

RRLUS Objectives – Amenity living – hobby farming	Considerations	Criteria or land attribute for evaluation
Close to residential areas	Direct rural based tourism to areas generally used for lifestyle purposes and avoid areas used for primary production	Existing land use
Good amenity	Consider areas in close proximity to the Murray River and National Parks and State Reserves	Proximity and accessibility to the Murray River and National parks and Reserves
Buffer to agriculture	Direct rural-based tourism towards areas that are already fragmented and have a compromised future for primary production Direct rural based tourism to areas generally used for lifestyle purposes Avoid land use for primary production	Existing land use
Efficient service provisions	Consider areas in close proximity to townships Avoid isolated development	Proximity to existing townships
Protect landscape values	Avoid open landscapes Consider areas that have opportunities to site development without compromising landscape values	Native vegetation
Requirements for tourism	Consider areas in proximity to existing tourism activities Consider areas that can complement existing tourism activities	Existing land use Proximity to existing tourism activities
Strategic Objectives – Rural Activity Zone	Considerations	Criteria or land attribute for evaluation
Provide for growth in rural based tourism that complements existing agricultural production and tourism	Consider areas with existing tourism uses	Existing land use

The criteria or land attributes that will be used for identifying land suitable for application of the Rural Activity Zone in Campaspe and Moira are therefore:

- Proximity to existing townships
- Accessibility to New South Wales townships
- Proximity to existing tourism uses
- Proximity to the Murray River
- Proximity to National and State Reserves

- Current planning controls and settlement strategies
- Proximity to NVIRP backbone
- Agricultural quality
- Existing settlement pattern (dwellings and lot sizes)

4 Campaspe Rural Activity Zone

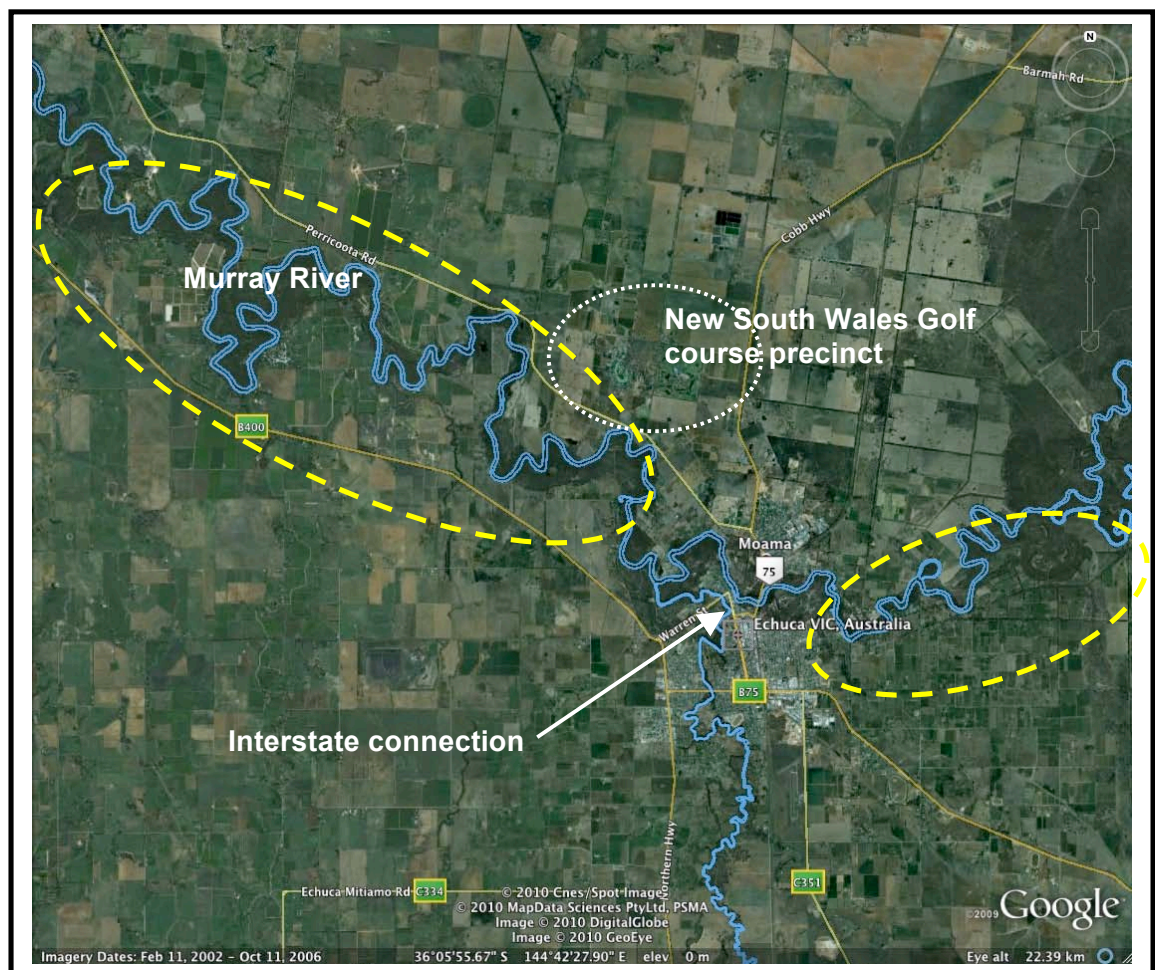
The criteria from Section 3.8 were applied to the Campaspe Shire. This was undertaken in a series of 'cuts' to sequentially eliminate areas that were not suited to Rural Activity Zone.

The criteria used in the first cut were:

- Proximity to existing townships
- Accessibility to New South Wales townships
- Proximity to existing tourism uses
- Proximity to the Murray River

The rural areas adjacent to Echuca met these criteria (Figure 4-1). Echuca is the main centre in Campaspe Shire providing a range of services. The rural areas to the east and west of Echuca are located on the Murray River and have direct accessibility to Moama in New South Wales via a connecting bridge in Echuca. Moama has a number of golf courses and associated accommodation and tourism services.

Figure 4-1 Campaspe Rural Activity Zone investigation areas east and west



The remaining criteria were then applied to the rural land adjacent to Echuca:

- Current planning controls and settlement strategies
- Proximity to NVIRP backbone
- Proximity to National and State Reserves and native vegetation
- Agricultural quality
- Existing settlement pattern (dwellings and lot sizes)

4.1 Echuca west Rural Activity Zone investigation area

The rural land west of Echuca highlighted in Figure 4-1 has the following attributes:

4.1.1 Current planning controls:

The zoning of rural land west of Echuca is primarily a mix of Rural Conservation Zone and Farming Zone (Figure 4-2). The Flooding, Land subject to Inundation and Wildfire Management Overlays have been applied to land in the investigation area (Figure 4-3)

Rural Conservation Zone has been applied to areas subject to flooding. It is a finding of the RRLUS (pages 72 and 116) that the Rural Conservation Zone has been inappropriately applied to these areas and that the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay or Flood Overlay should be used to control development in these areas. The RRLUS recommended that they be rezoned to Farming Zone. Tourism development should be avoided in areas where the Flood Overlay has been applied.

An area of Low Density Residential Zone and Residential 1 Zoned land indicates the long-term direction for growth of Echuca.

Rural Activity Zone could be considered for the land currently zoned Farming, avoiding new development in areas subject to the Flooding Overlay.

Figure 4-2 Zoning of rural land west of Echuca (<http://services.land.vic.gov.au>)

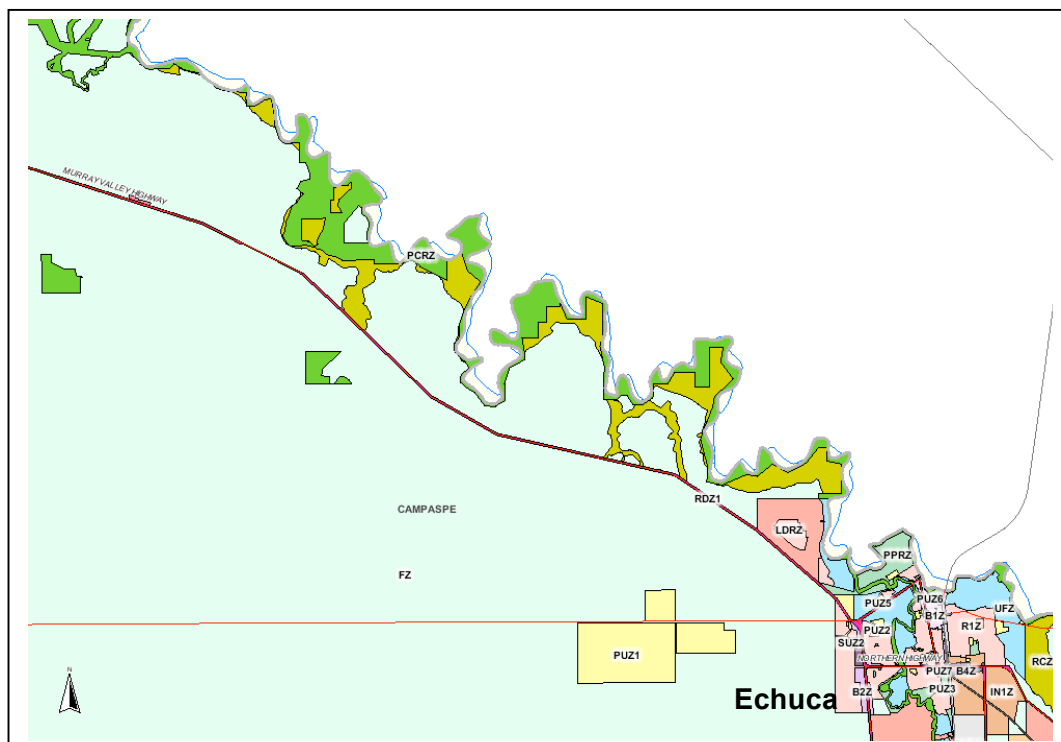
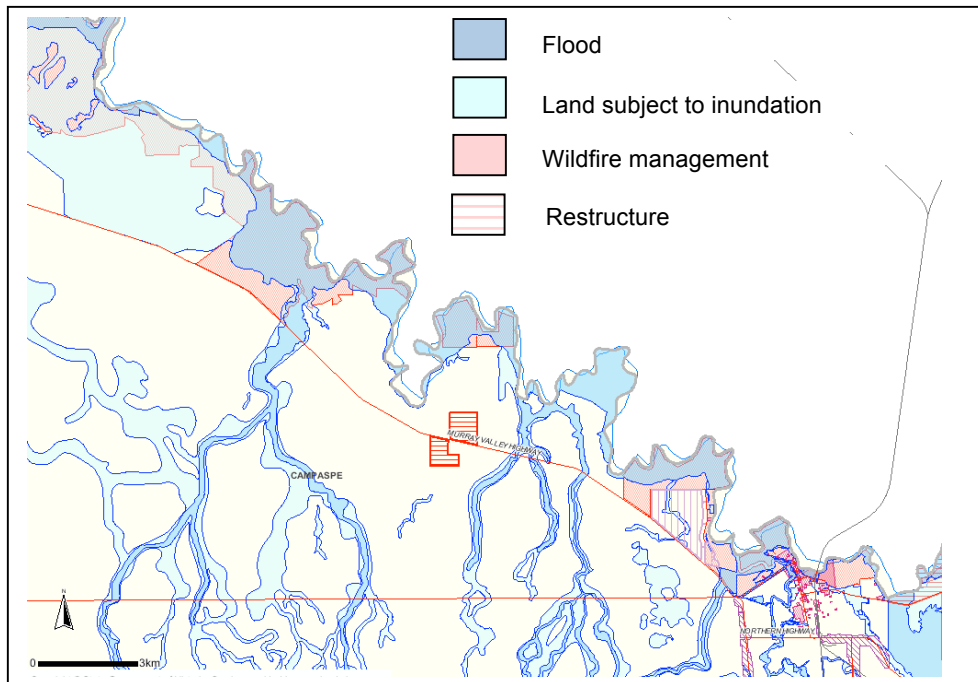


Figure 4-3 Overlays on rural land west of Echuca



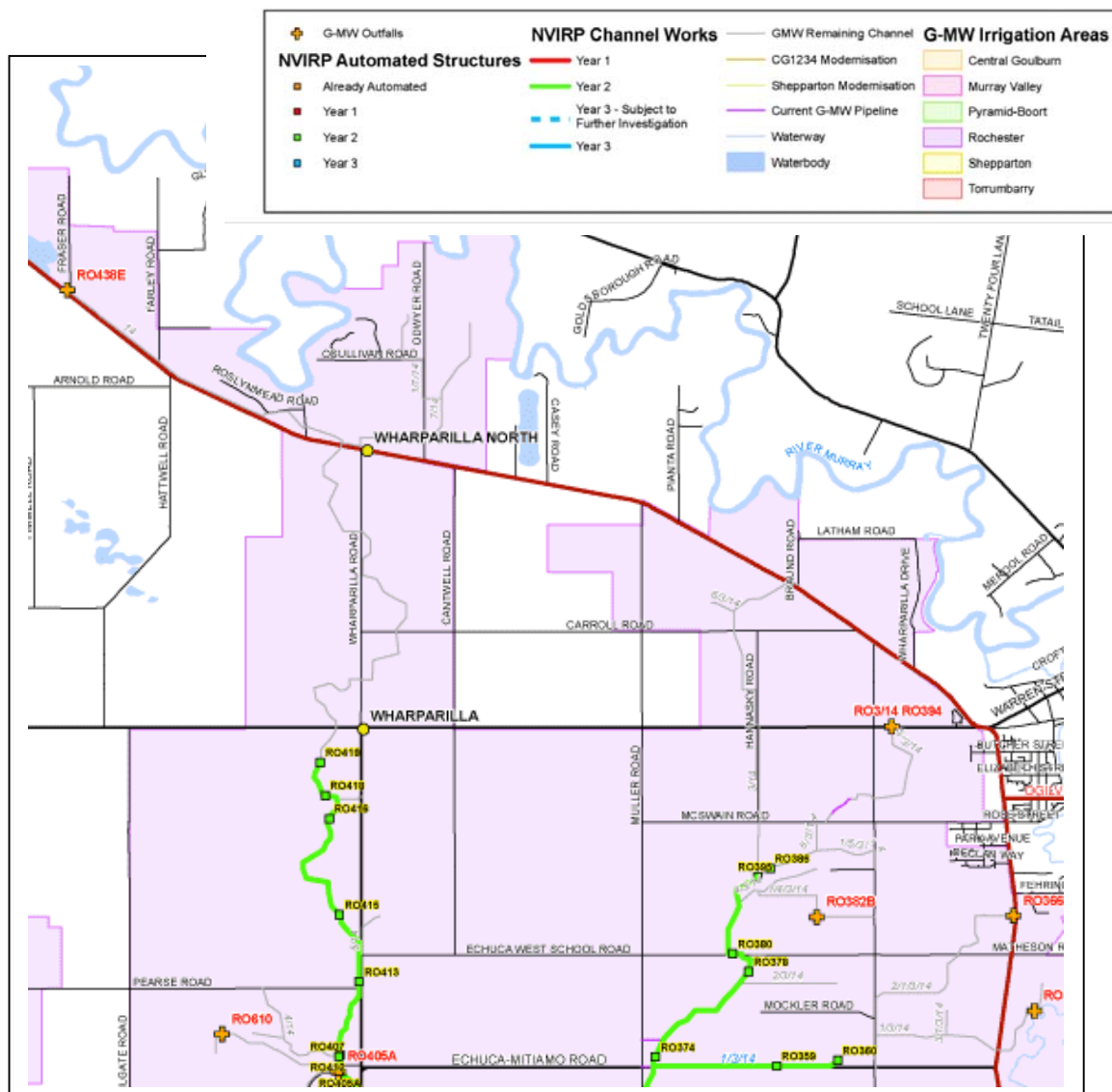
4.1.2 NVIRP Backbone and irrigation infrastructure

The NVIRP backbone completed in Year 1 of the project runs alongside the Murray Valley Highway. Further backbone renewal works are not proposed for the area north of the Murray Valley Highway, as most irrigators between the Murray Valley Highway and the Murray River would be sourcing irrigation water directly from the River (Figure 4-4). Year 2 of the backbone upgrade will include some works south of the Murray Valley Highway.

The area south of the Murray Valley Highway is not suited for application of the Rural Activity Zone. Tourism developments would be inconsistent with irrigated agriculture and may compromise efficiency gains sought through NVIRP.

Figure 4-4 NVIRP backbone map – west of Echuca

(<http://www.nvirp.com.au/images/backbone/20100108-RIA-NVIRP-Works-A3-Portrait.gif>)



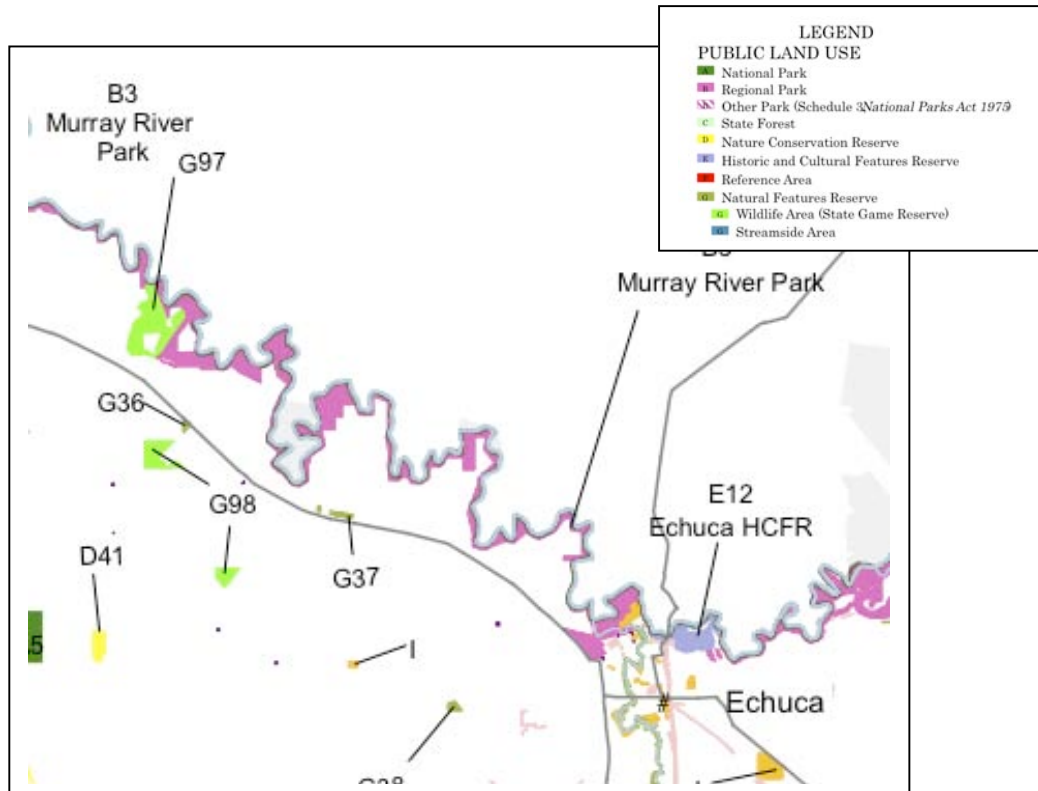
4.1.3 Proximity to National and State Reserves and native vegetation

The land immediately adjacent to the Murray River has been identified for inclusion in the Murray River Park (Figure 4-5) and has significant stands of remnant vegetation.

This land lends itself to the nature tourism objectives of the Nature Based Tourism Strategy and consistent with the intention of Rural Activity Zone in Campaspe.

Figure 4-5 Murray River Park west of Echuca

([http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/DF2030374C8D6CF2CA2575770015C6AF/\\$File/Victorias+River+Red+Gum+National+Parks+detailed+map_4.9MB.pdf](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/DF2030374C8D6CF2CA2575770015C6AF/$File/Victorias+River+Red+Gum+National+Parks+detailed+map_4.9MB.pdf))



4.1.4 Agricultural quality

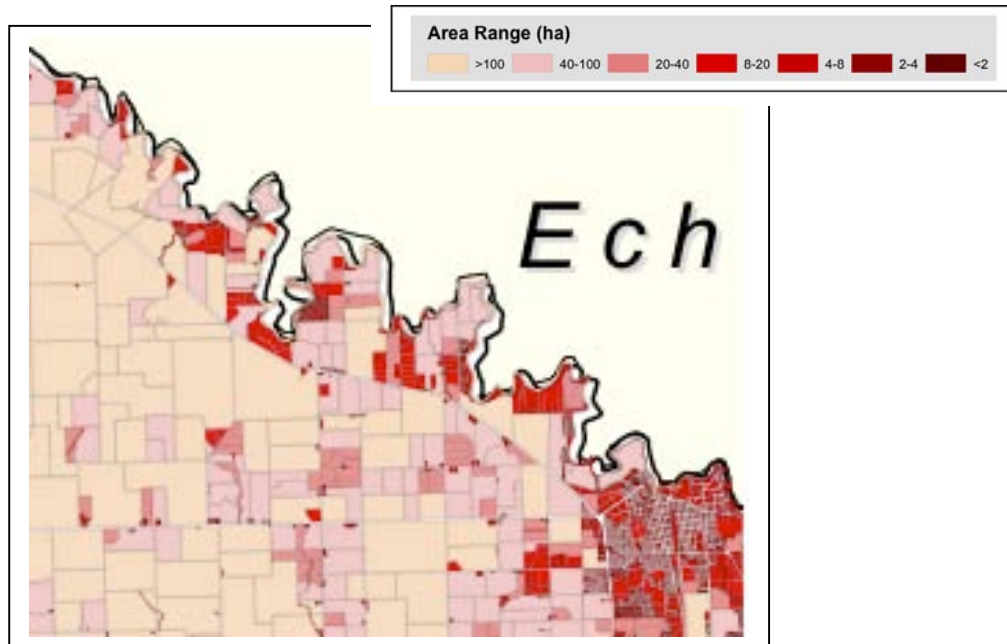
The agricultural quality of the land is a mix of Class 3 and 4 - medium agricultural quality and Class 5 and 6 – low agricultural quality (refer to Map 1 RRLUS, page 208). The investigation area has no land with high or very high agricultural quality.

4.1.5 Lot sizes

The land north of the Murray Valley highway is substantially more fragmented than land south of the Highway (Figure 4-6). North of the highway there are a number of rural residential clusters amongst lots ranging in size from 8 to 40ha with a few large lots over 100ha (refer to Map 2 RRLUS for full map of lot size range).

There are also a number of exiting tourism facilities including a caravan park, farm stays and bed and breakfast accommodation. An integrated tourism development has also been proposed for the area at Pianta Road, which seeks to incorporate holiday cabins and a day spa facility with paddle steamer links to the Port of Echuca.

Figure 4-6 Lot sizes of rural land west of Echuca (RRLUS)

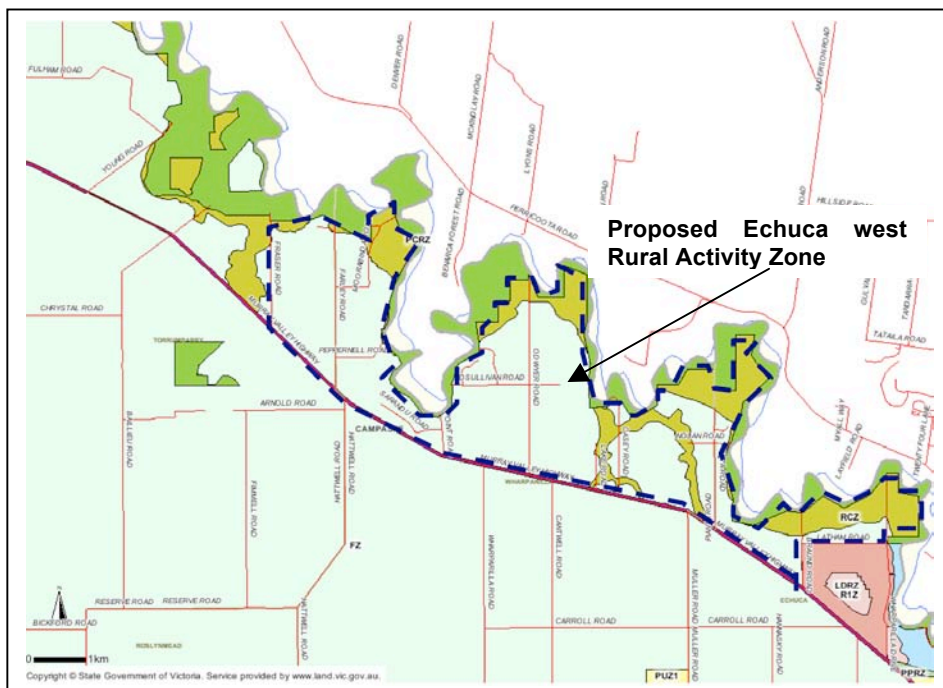


4.1.6 Conclusion

Based on the criteria, the land north of the Murray Valley Highway and west of Braund Road through to Fraser Road has been found to be suited to application of the Rural Activity Zone. The types of uses to be encouraged in this area include:

- Accommodation such as bed and breakfast and farm stays, caravan parks
- Recreational and leisure activities that complement existing uses such as boating, eco-tourism, nature retreats

Figure 4-7 Echuca west proposed Rural Activity Zone area



4.1.7 Echuca west Rural Activity Zone – strategic direction

This RRLUS Implementation report has identified an area west of Echuca for application of the Rural Activity Zone. This area currently contains a number of key tourist attractions and accommodation facilities from Caravan Parks to farm stay and bed and breakfasts. These facilities deliver significant economic benefit to Echuca and the surrounding region. A key to the location and development of these facilities has been the locations proximity to the Murray River.

It is important that opportunities for tourism and appropriate lifestyle development based on these assets continue to be provided. It is also important to recognise that agriculture cannot compete against the demand for land for such high value uses in this key location, and that in many instances environmental assets and landscape characteristics are barriers to larger scale farm management. Whilst some of the land along the Murray River has agricultural value, this is outweighed by the tourism values of the area.

This is further demonstrated via the Pianta Road integrated Tourism development which seeks to incorporate holiday cabins and a day spa facility, with paddle steamer links to the Port of Echuca.

4.2 Echuca east Rural Activity Zone investigation area

4.2.1 Current planning controls and strategies

The rural land east of Echuca is mostly zoned Rural Conservation Zone and Farming Zone (

Figure 4-8). The Flood, Land subject to Inundation and Wildfire Management Overlays have been applied to land in the investigation area (

Figure 4-9).

Rural Conservation Zone has been applied to areas subject to flooding. It was a finding of the RRLUS (pages 72 and 116) that the Rural Conservation Zone has been inappropriately applied to these areas and that the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay or Flood Overlay should be used to control development in these areas. The RRLUS recommended that these areas be rezoned to Farming Zone. Tourism development should be avoided in areas where the Flood Overlay has been applied.

A Restructure Overlay has been applied to the Echuca Village Area. The Echuca Village Structure Plan seeks to:

- To manage the development of old subdivisions in flood prone land via an equitable approach to development rights in the area.
- To ensure that future development maintains the environmental values of the area.
- To ensure that development policy supports catchment management and floodplain management strategies.
- To support the continued operation of remaining agricultural enterprises.

Note also the recommendations at Section 2.7.1 of this report regarding the application of the Farming Zone to land east of Echuca.

Figure 4-8 Zoning of rural land east of Echuca

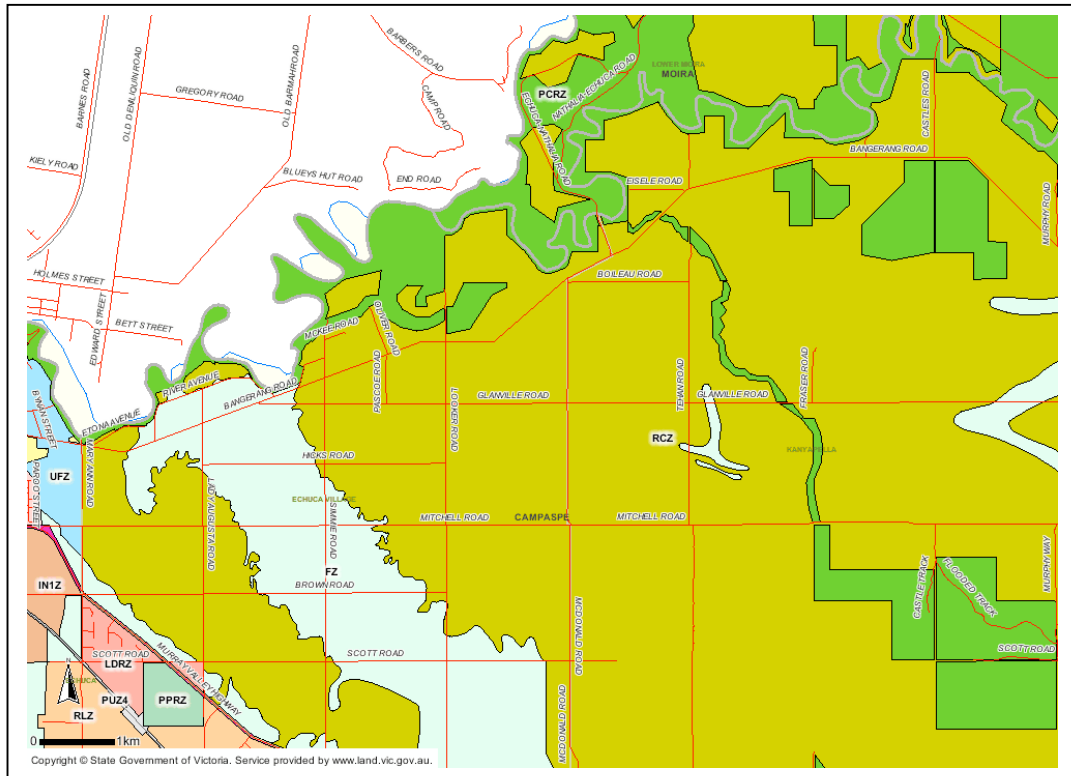
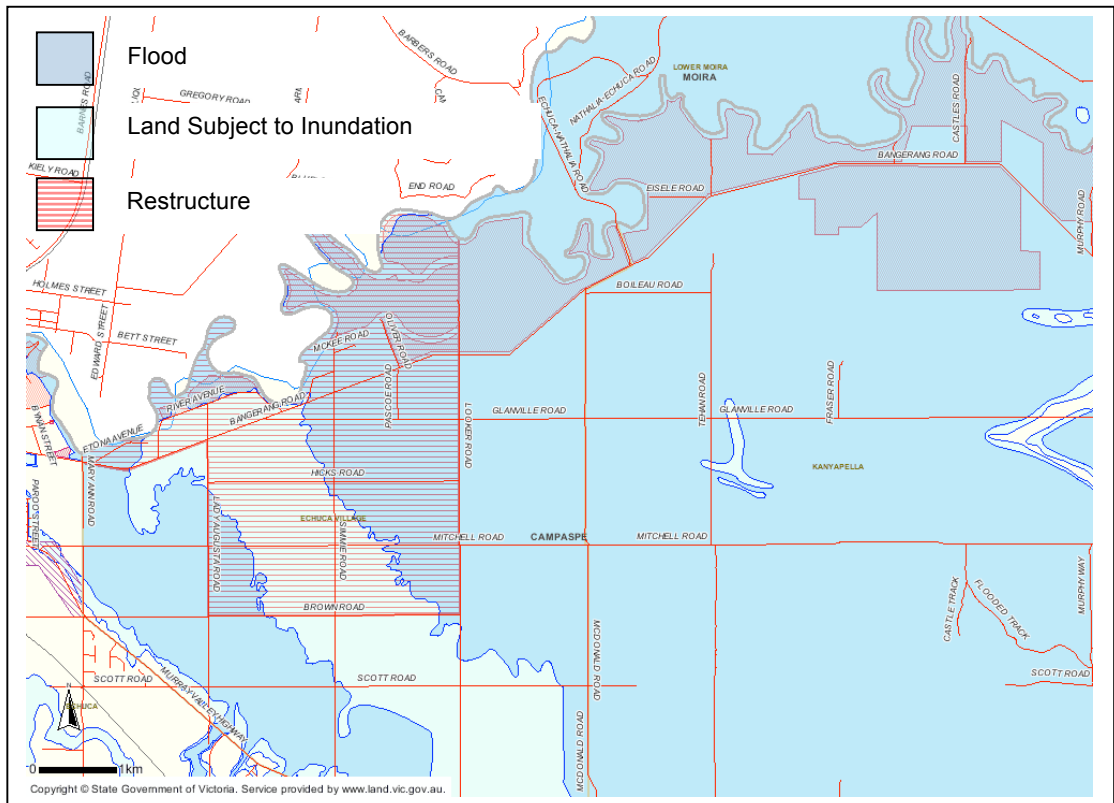


Figure 4-9 Overlays on rural land east of Echuca



4.2.2 Conclusion

The Rural Activity Zone is not considered appropriate in the Echuca east Investigation Area due to the significant extent of the Flood Overlay and the significant housing development already in the area

5 Moira Rural Activity Zone

The criteria from Section 3.8 were applied to the Moira Shire. This was undertaken in a series of 'cuts' to sequentially eliminate areas that were not suited to Rural Activity Zone.

The criteria used in the first cut were:

- Proximity to existing townships
- Accessibility to New South Wales townships
- Proximity to existing tourism uses
- Proximity to the Murray River

The rural areas adjacent to Yarrawonga and Cobram met these criteria (Figure 5-1).

Yarrawonga is the main centre in Moira Shire providing a range of services. The adjacent rural areas are located on the Murray River and Lake Mulwala and have direct accessibility to Mulwala in New South Wales via a connecting bridge in Yarrawonga. Mulwala has a number of golf courses and associated accommodation and tourism services.

Cobram is a major town in Moira Shire. The adjacent rural areas are located on the Murray River and have direct accessibility to Barooga in New South Wales via a connecting bridge in Cobram. Barooga has a number of golf courses and associated accommodation and tourism services. Note that the RRLUS identified land south of the Murray Valley Highway for application of the Rural Activity Zone. This report has found that the land south of the Highway should not be considered for the Rural Activity Zone, as it does not meet these first order criteria.

Barmah is also located close to the Murray River and has accessibility to New South Wales. However, the town is very small with limited services. It is considered that the range of tourism activities that could be provided by the Farming Zone and are more suited to Barmah.

The remaining criteria were then applied to the Rural Activity Zone investigation areas, including:

- Current planning controls and settlement strategies
- Proximity to NVIRP backbone
- Proximity to National and State Reserves and native vegetation
- Agricultural quality
- Existing settlement pattern – lot sizes

5.1 Yarrowonga east investigation area

5.1.1 Current Planning Controls

The rural land east of Yarrowonga within the investigation areas is zoned Farming (Figure 5-3). The area at Bundalong is zoned Low Density Residential Zone. A Flooding Overlay applies to some land east of Yarrowonga. Tourism development should be avoided in areas where a Flood Overlay applies.

Figure 5-3 Zoning of rural land east of Yarrowonga

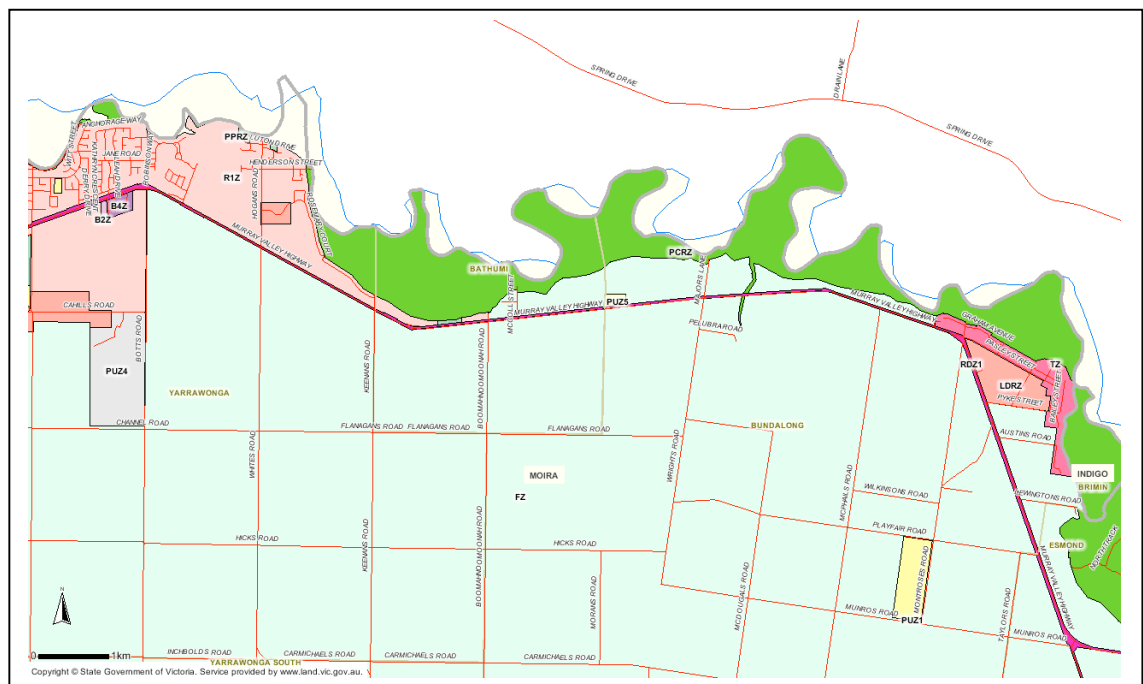
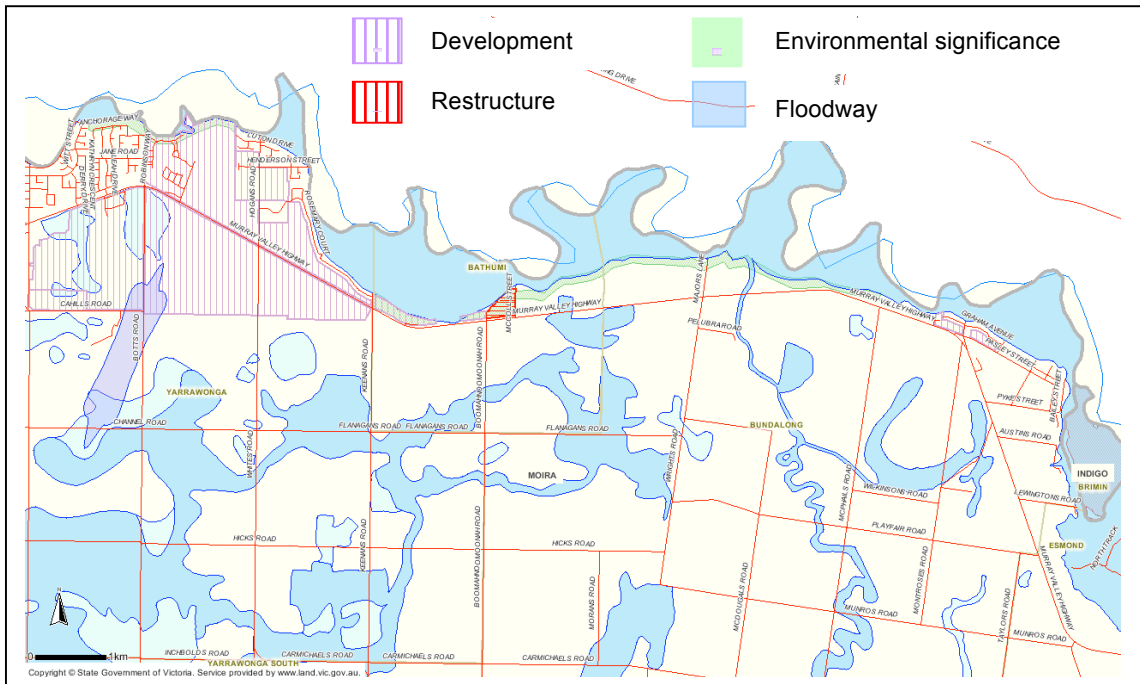


Figure 5-4 Overlays on rural land east of Yarrawonga



5.1.2 NVIRP Backbone and irrigation infrastructure

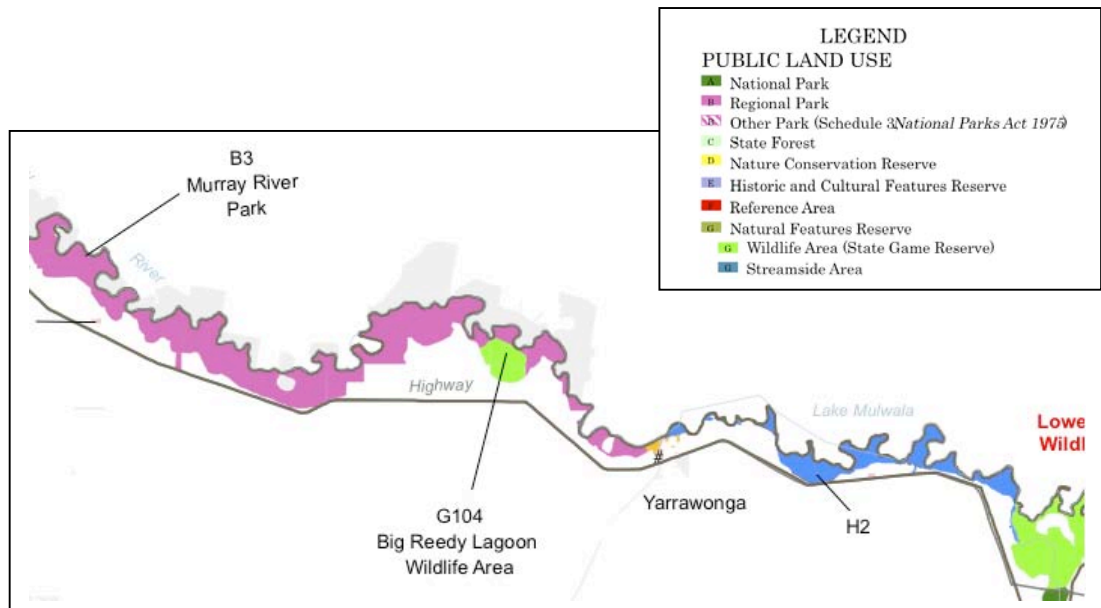
Irrigation infrastructure does not continue upstream of Lake Mulwala. Irrigation to the east of Yarrawonga is by direct diversion from the river and groundwater pumping.

5.1.3 Proximity to National and State Reserves and native vegetation

The land east of Yarrawonga has indirect frontage to Lake Mulwala (Figure 5-5) as well as having significant stands of remnant vegetation. This land lends itself to the nature tourism objectives of the Nature Based Tourism Strategy and consistent with the intention of Rural Activity Zone in Moira

Figure 5-5 Murray River Park

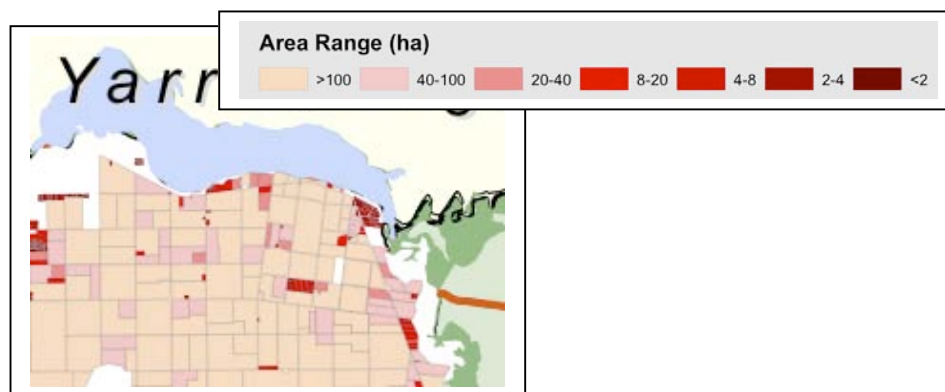
([http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/DF2030374C8D6CF2CA2575770015C6AF/\\$File/Victorias+River+Red+Gum+National+Parks+detailed+map_4.9MB.pdf](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/DF2030374C8D6CF2CA2575770015C6AF/$File/Victorias+River+Red+Gum+National+Parks+detailed+map_4.9MB.pdf))



5.1.4 Existing settlement pattern - lot sizes

The land north of the Murray Valley highway is more fragmented than land south of the Highway (Figure 5-6). North of the highway there are a number of rural residential clusters amongst lots ranging in size from 8ha to 40ha with a few large lots over 100ha (refer to Map 2 RRLUS for full map of lot size range).

Figure 5-6 Lot sizes of rural land east of Yarrawonga



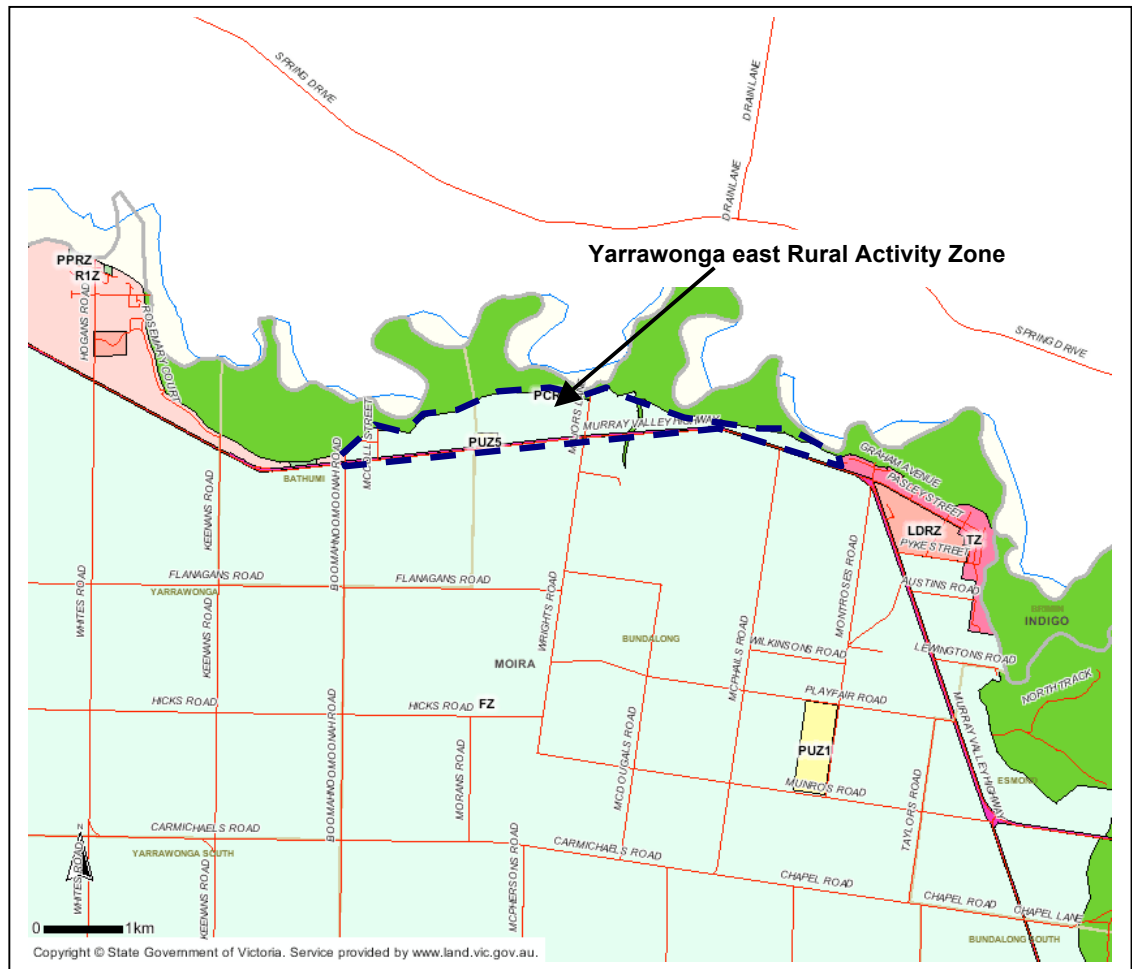
5.1.5 Conclusion

Based on the criteria, the land north of the Murray Valley Highway between Boomahnoomoonah Road and Bundalong is recommended for application of Rural Activity Zone. Given the small scale and predominantly agricultural use of the land in the area, tourism uses should also be of small scale such as farm stays, bed and breakfasts. Larger scale uses that should be avoided include caravan parks, convenience shops and residential hotels.

5.1.6 Yarrowonga east Rural Activity Zone – strategic direction

This RRLUS Implementation report has identified an area east of Yarrowonga for application of the Rural Activity Zone. A key to the attraction of this area for tourism is its location and proximity to the Murray River.

Figure 5-7 Yarrowonga east Rural Activity Zone



5.2 Yarrowonga west Rural Activity Zone investigation area

5.2.1 Current Planning Controls

The rural land west of Yarrowonga within the investigation area is zoned Farming (Figure 5-8). A Flooding Overlay applies to some land to the west of Yarrowonga. Tourism development should be avoided in areas where a Flood Overlay applies.

Figure 5-8 Zoning of rural land west of Yarrawonga

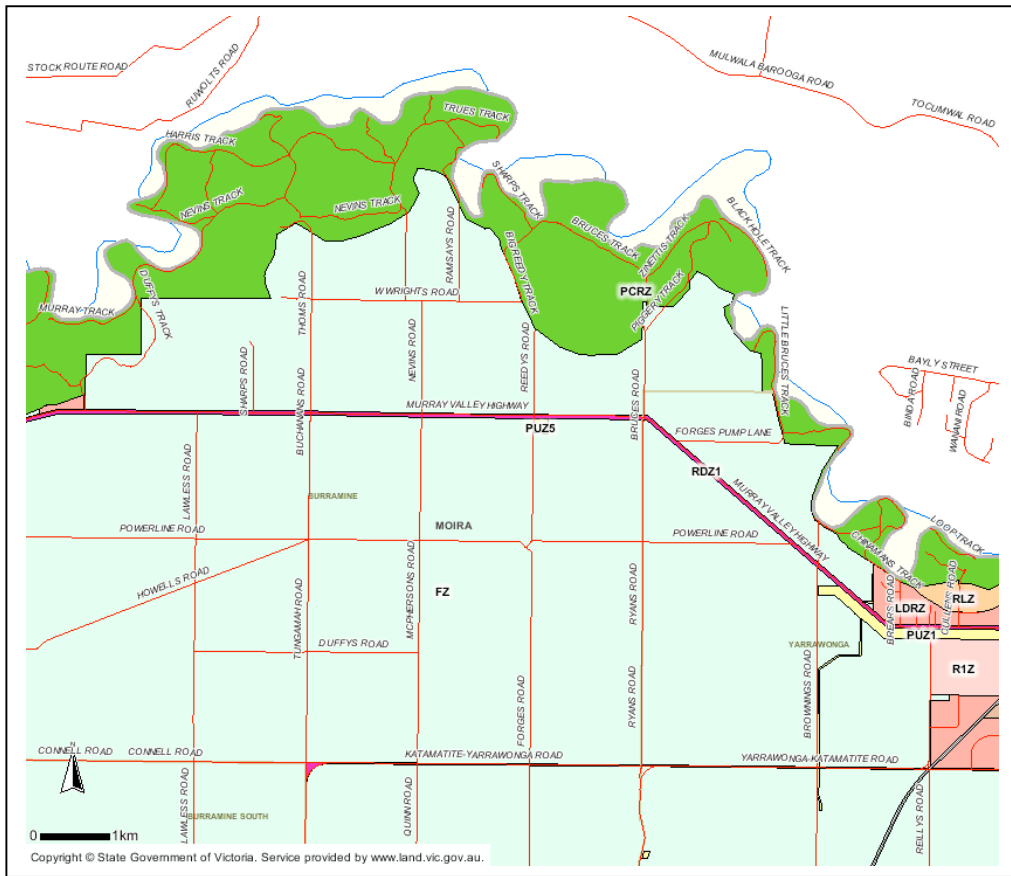
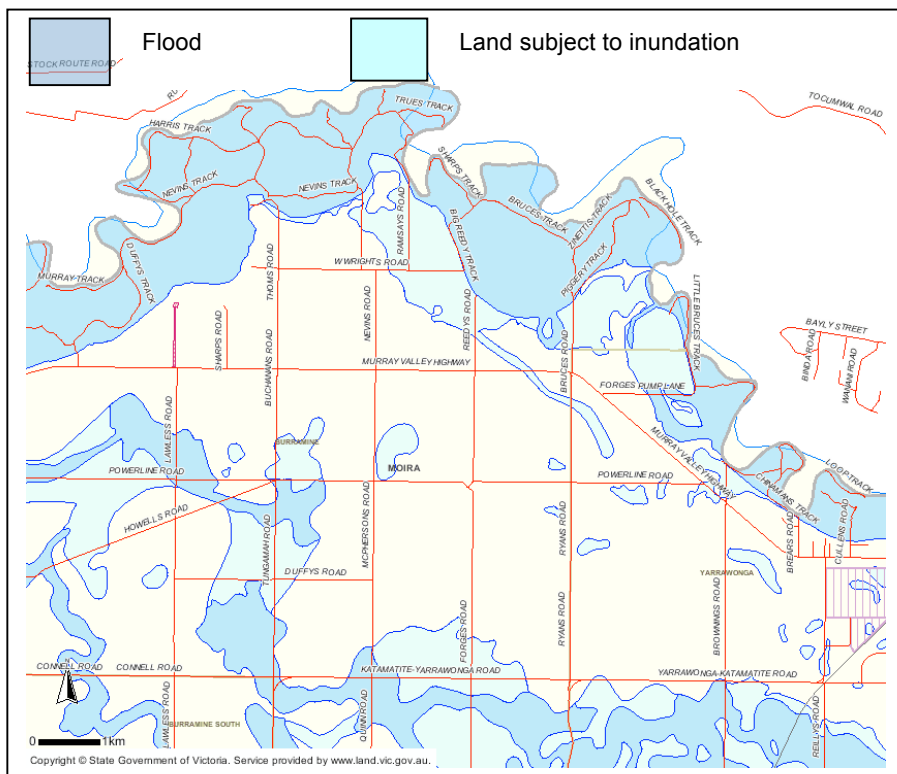


Figure 5-9 Overlays on rural land west of Yarrawonga



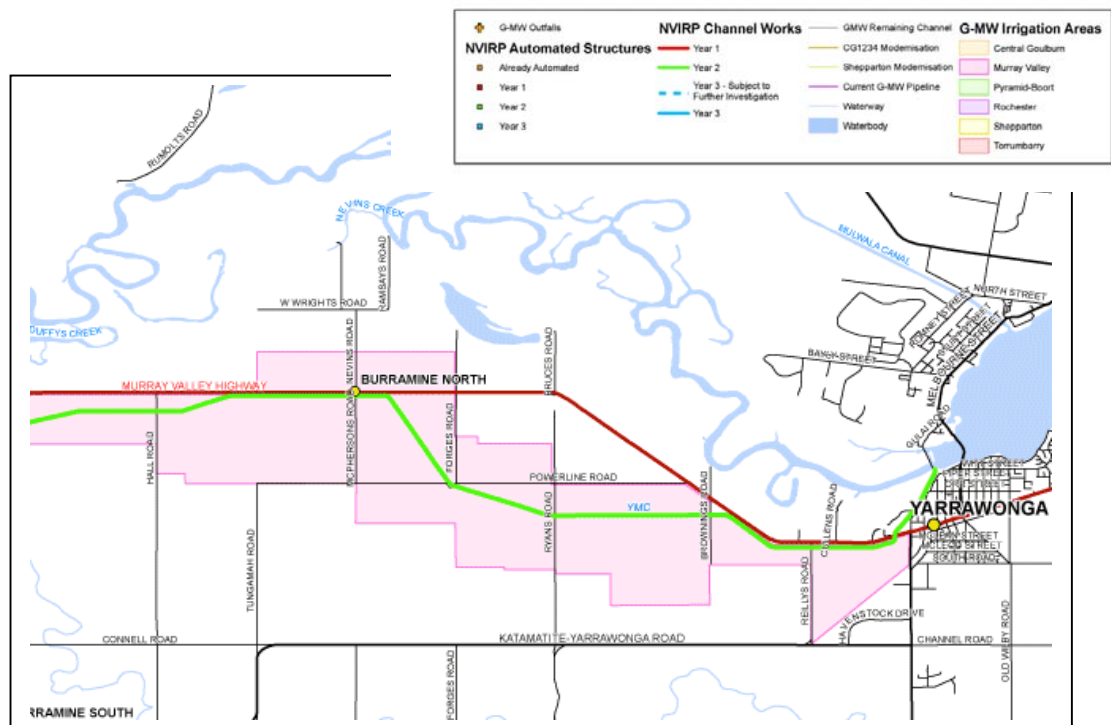
5.2.2 NVIRP Backbone and irrigation infrastructure

The NVIRP backbone completed in Year 1 of the project runs alongside the Murray Valley Highway. Further backbone renewal works are not proposed for the area north of the Murray Valley Highway, as most irrigators between the Murray Valley Highway and the Murray River would be sourcing irrigation water directly from the River (Figure 5-10). Year 2 of the backbone upgrade will include some works south of the Murray Valley Highway.

The area south of the Murray Valley Highway is not suited for application of the Rural Activity Zone. Tourism developments would be inconsistent with irrigated agriculture and may compromise efficiency gains sought through NVIRP.

Figure 5-10 NVIRP backbone map

(<http://www.nvirp.com.au/images/backbone/20100108-RIA-NVIRP-Works-A3-Portrait.gif>)



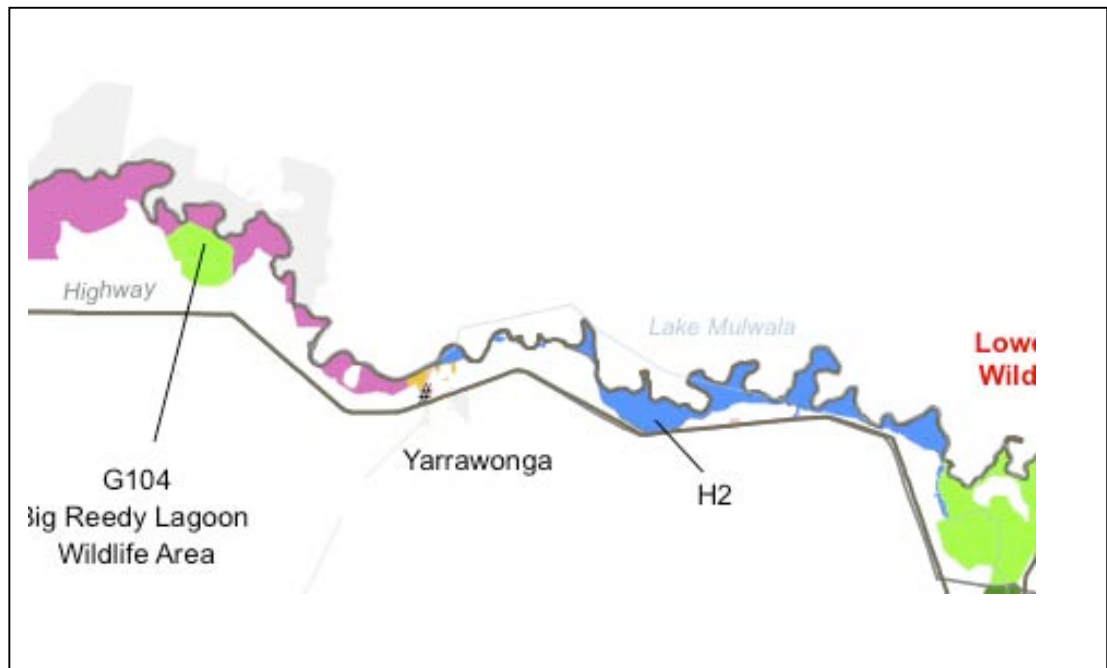
5.2.3 Proximity to National and State Reserves and native vegetation

The land immediately adjacent to the Murray River has been identified for inclusion in the Murray River Park (Figure 5-11). The land immediately adjacent to the river has significant stands of remnant vegetation.

This land lends itself to the nature tourism objectives of the Nature Based Tourism Strategy and consistent with the intention of Rural Activity Zone in Moira.

Figure 5-11 Murray River Park

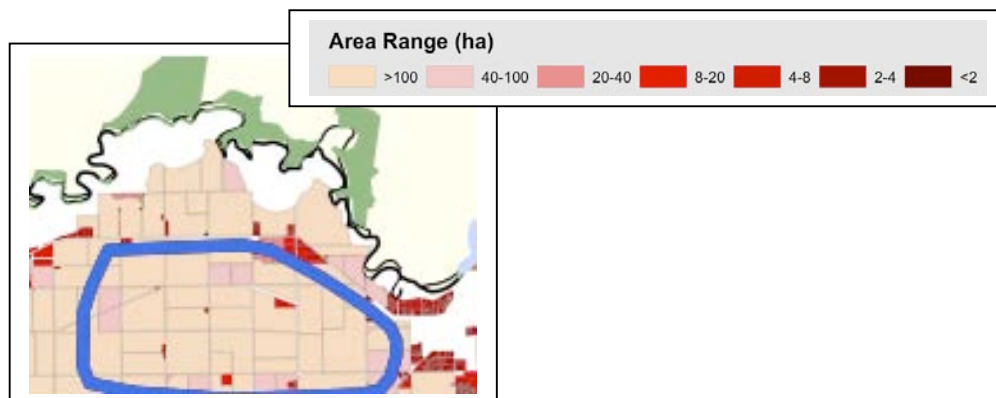
([http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/DF2030374C8D6CF2CA2575770015C6AF/\\$File/Victorias+River+Red+Gum+National+Parks+detailed+map_4.9MB.pdf](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/DF2030374C8D6CF2CA2575770015C6AF/$File/Victorias+River+Red+Gum+National+Parks+detailed+map_4.9MB.pdf))



5.2.4 Existing settlement pattern - lot sizes

The land north of the Murray Valley highway is more fragmented than land south of the Highway (Figure 5-12). North of the highway there are a number of rural residential clusters amongst lots ranging in size from 8ha to 40ha with a few large lots over 100ha (refer to Map 2 RRLUS for full map of lot size range).

Figure 5-12 Lot sizes of rural land east of Yarrowonga



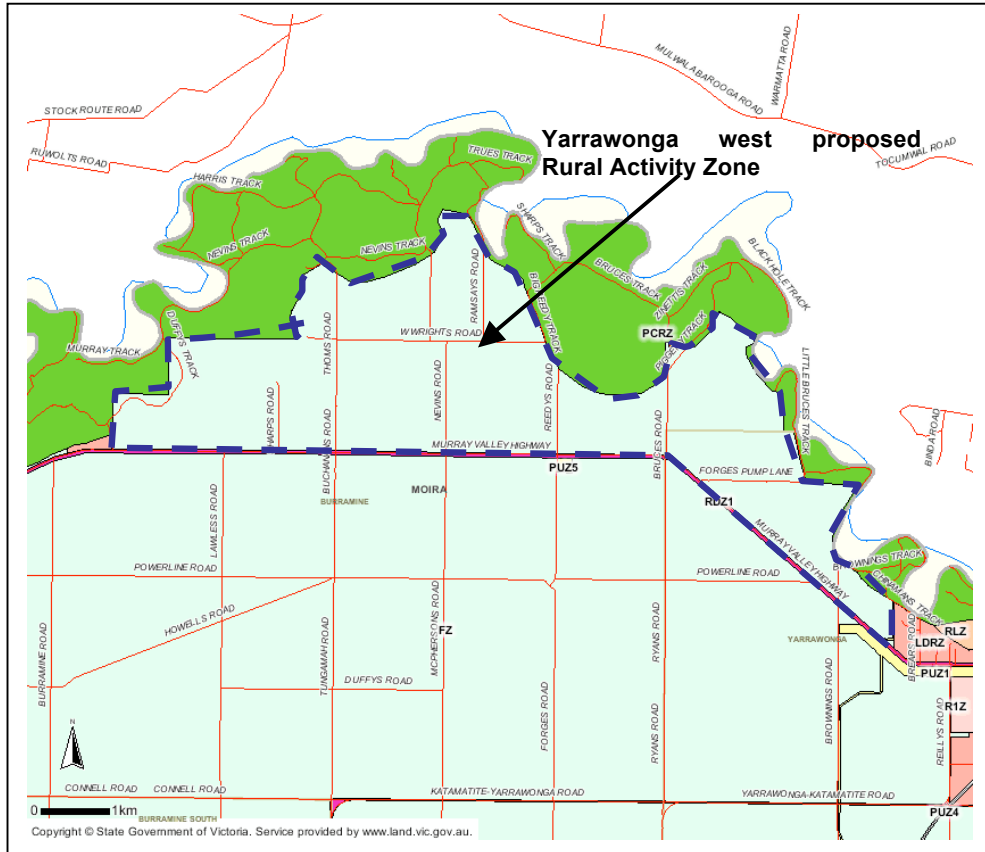
5.2.5 Conclusion

The land north of the Murray Valley Highway between the Yarrowonga Main Channel and Duffys Lane is recommended for application of Rural Activity Zone (Figure 5-13).

5.2.6 Yarrawonga west – strategic directions

This RRLUS Implementation report has identified an area east of Yarrawonga for application of the Rural Activity Zone. A key to the attraction of this area for tourism is its location and proximity to the Murray River.

Figure 5-13 Yarrawonga west proposed Rural Activity Zone



5.3 Cobram east Rural Activity Zone investigation area

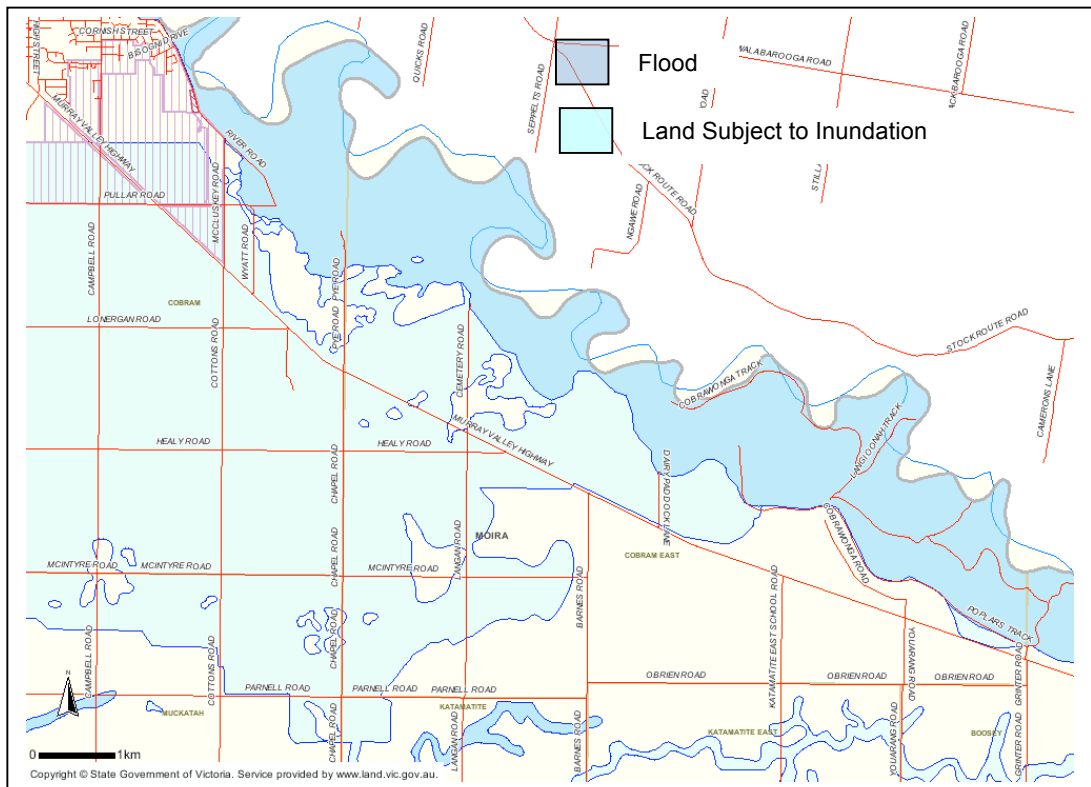
5.3.1 Current planning controls

The rural land east of Cobram within the investigation area is zoned Farming (Figure 5-14) with a small area of Public Use Zone. The Land Subject to Inundation Overlay has widely been applied to the area.

Figure 5-14 Zoning of rural land east of Cobram



Figure 5-15 Overlays on rural land east of Cobram



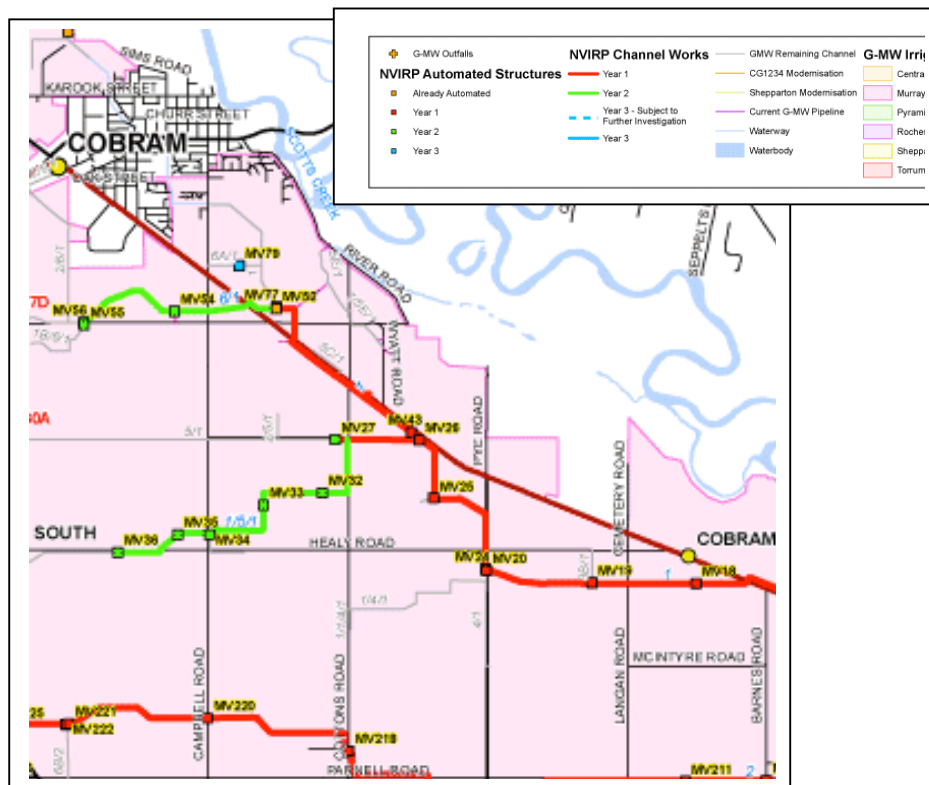
5.3.2 NVIRP backbone and irrigation infrastructure

The NVIRP backbone completed in Year 1 of the project runs alongside the Murray Valley Highway. Further backbone renewal works are not proposed for the area north of the Highway.

The area south of the Murray Valley Highway is not suited to application of the Rural Activity Zone. Tourism developments would be inconsistent with irrigated agriculture and may compromise efficiency gains sought through NVIRP.

Figure 5-16 NVIRP backbone map

(<http://www.nvirp.com.au/images/backbone/20100108-RIA-NVIRP-Works-A3-Portrait.gif>)

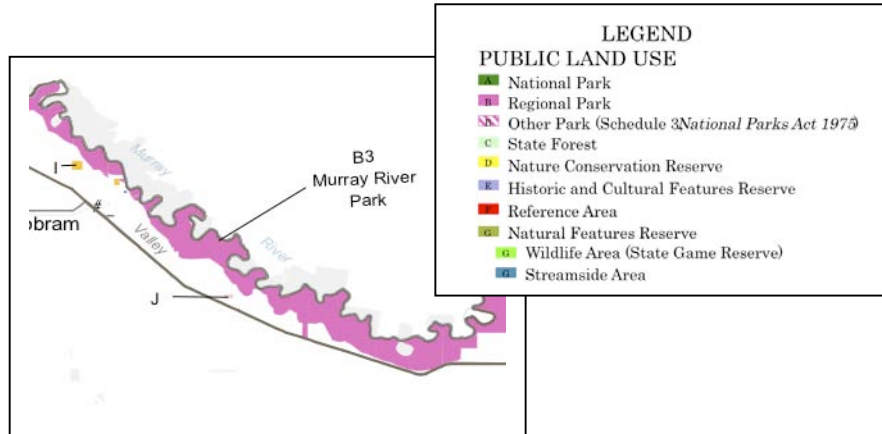


5.3.3 Proximity to National and State Reserves and native vegetation

The land immediately adjacent to the Murray River has been identified for inclusion in the Murray River Park and has significant stands of remnant vegetation (Figure 5-17). This land lends itself to the nature tourism objectives of the Nature Based Tourism Strategy and consistent with the intention of the Rural Activity Zone in Moira.

Figure 5-17 Murray River Park

([http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/DF2030374C8D6CF2CA2575770015C6AF/\\$File/Victorias+River+Red+Gum+National+Parks+detailed+map_4.9MB.pdf](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/CA256F310024B628/0/DF2030374C8D6CF2CA2575770015C6AF/$File/Victorias+River+Red+Gum+National+Parks+detailed+map_4.9MB.pdf))



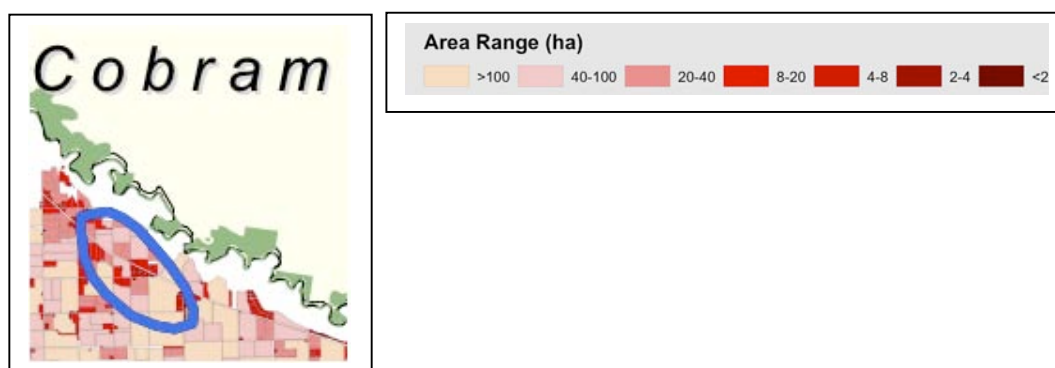
5.3.4 Agricultural quality

The agricultural quality of the land is a mix of Class 1 and Class 2 – very high and high agricultural quality land (refer to Map 1 RRLUS, page 208).

5.3.5 Existing lot sizes

The land north of the Murray Valley Highway is slightly more fragmented than land south of the highway (Figure 5-18). North of the highway there are a number of rural residential clusters amongst lots ranging in size from 8ha to 100ha (refer to Map 2 RRLUS for full map of lot size range)

Figure 5-18 Lot sizes in Cobram east



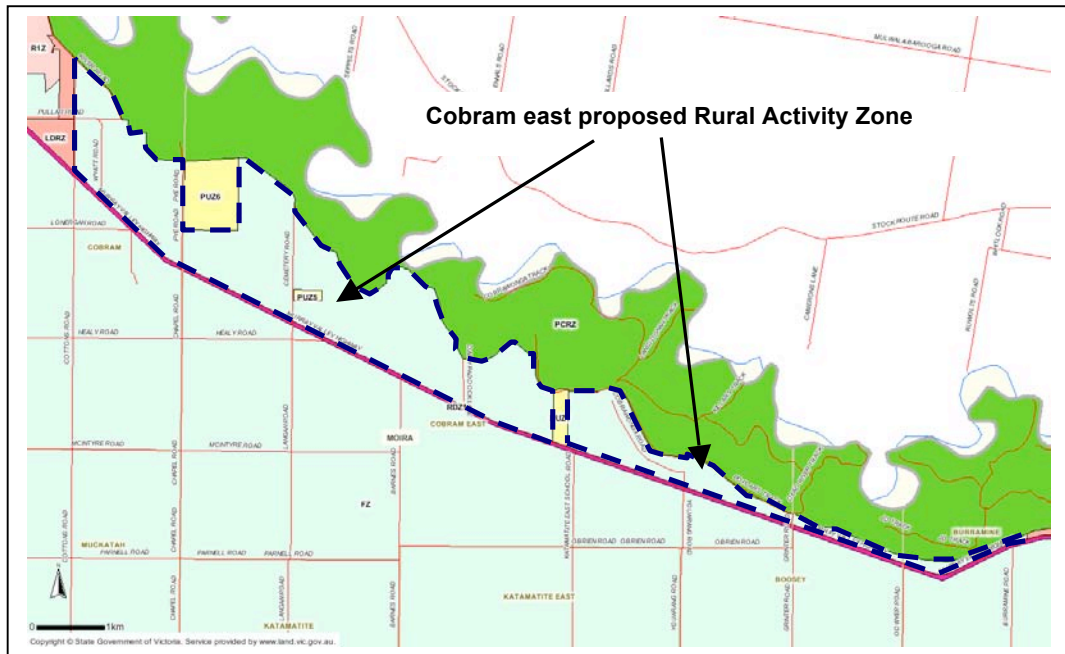
5.3.6 Conclusion

The land north of the Murray Valley Highway between

5.3.7 Cobram east proposed Rural Activity Zone – strategic directions

This RRLUS Implementation report has identified an area east of Cobram for application of the Rural Activity Zone. A key to the attraction of this area for tourism is its location and proximity to the Murray River.

Figure 5-19 Cobram east proposed Rural Activity Zone



5.4 Cobram west

5.4.1 Current planning controls

The rural land west of Cobram is predominantly zoned Farming (Figure 5-20). The Flood Overlay applies to a significant proportion of the area west of Cobram and tourism development should be avoided in this area.

Rural Activity Zone is therefore considered not suitable to the area west of Cobram.

Figure 5-20 Zoning of rural land west of Cobram

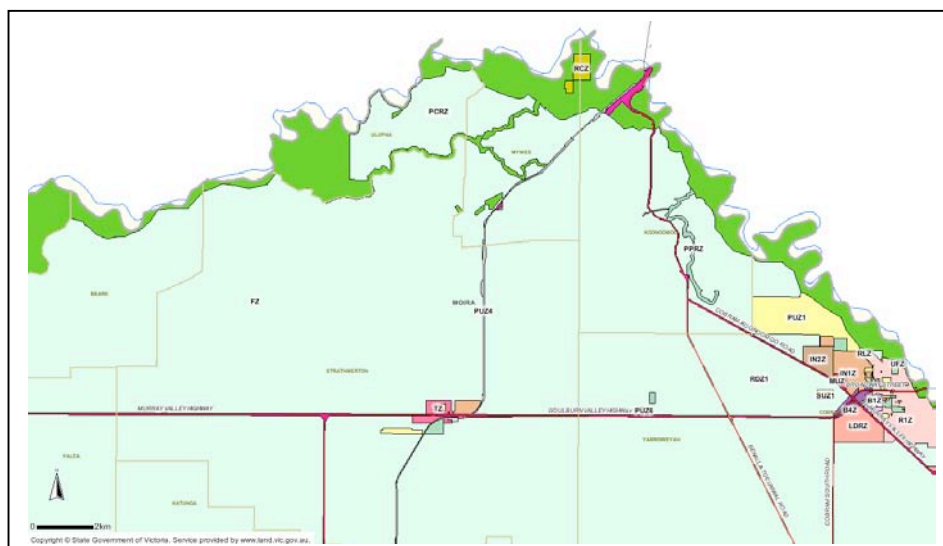
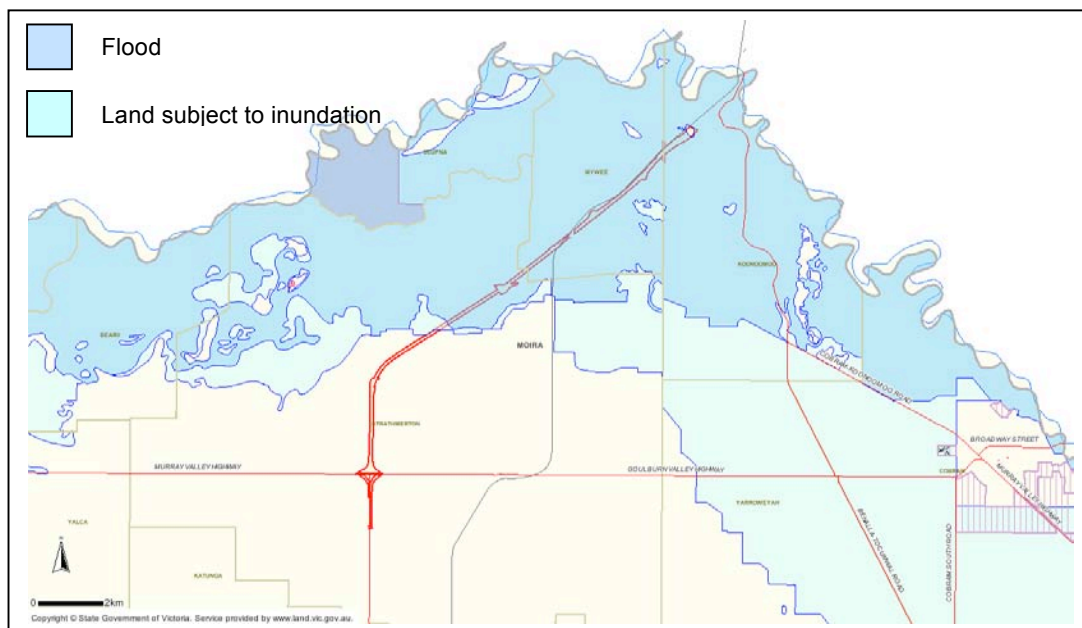


Figure 5-21 Overlays on rural land west of Cobram



6 Rural Activity Zone Implementation

This section of the report outlines the objectives and policy for implementation of the Rural Activity Zone in Moira and Campaspe.

6.1 Strategic objectives

To promote and encourage a diverse range of agricultural activities, which do not rely upon large land holdings.

- To promote and encourage tourism use and development that is compatible with agricultural production and the environmental attributes of the area.
- To discourage uses in the Rural Activity Zone which can be reasonably accommodated in an urban zone.
- To protect the rural character of the Shire by minimising the visual intrusion of new buildings on the natural landscape, particularly from highways and the Murray River.
- To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.
- To ensure that non-agricultural uses, particularly dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.

6.2 Key strategies

- Ensure that the land is retained in parcels suitable for agriculture
- Avoid the proliferation of housing on small lots
- Encourage uses directly related to and that will introduce conflict with agriculture
- Ensure that the siting of dwellings and other developments do not detract from the rural landscape and avoid environmental risks
- Provide for tourism developments that will not compromise agricultural, environmental and landscape values
- Prevent ribbon development along major highways and access roads to towns
- Avoid compromising efficiency gains from modernisation of irrigation infrastructure
- Protect environmental values

6.3 Preferred uses

The preferred mix of uses in the Rural Activity Zone include:

- Agriculture
- Tourist and recreational activities
- Group accommodation associated with tourist or recreational activities (including backpacker accommodation, camping and caravan park, cabins, residential motel etc)
- Restaurant, but only in association with a tourist / recreational activity

All development and use should be:

- Of modest scale, relevant to the land size, surrounding uses and the ability to blend with the landscape.
- Subservient to the landscape so as not to detract from the quality of the landscape.
- Capable of net gain environmental outcomes.
- Self-sufficient in the provision of relevant infrastructure and associated development costs.

Uses that would not be supported include:

- convenience shop
- equestrian supplies
- motor racing track
- hotel
- landscape gardening supplies
- Store, tavern and similar uses
- intensive animal husbandry, cattle feedlot
- Residential hotel
- Service station

6.4 Dwellings

In the Rural Activity Zone dwellings are a Section 2 use and therefore all new dwellings will require a permit.

The primary purpose of the Rural Activity Zone is to provide for agriculture and where appropriate, some other compatible uses. The Rural Activity Zone does not seek to provide for rural residential outcomes. Increased dwelling development will ultimately compromise the values of the areas identified for application of the Rural Activity Zone as suitable for agriculture and rural-based tourism. Therefore, it is recommended that the Rural Housing Policy proposed for the Farming Zone also apply to land zoned for Rural Activity.

6.5 Other Rural Activity Zone issues

It is acknowledged that there may be one-off proposals of a substantial size not associated with agriculture that may have significant regional benefits. Such proposals would be subject to a rezoning proposal.

It is recommended that Moira and Campaspe investigate further via a Tourism Strategy:

- Whether any large-scale one-off proposals are appropriate in the Shire
- How such proposals link with the townships
- Develop appropriate policy around these issues

With regard to the findings of this report, it would be important that such a project consider the following from a rural perspective:

- Why such development requires a rural location and why it cannot be located within a town
- What are the site selection criteria what would make a site suitable for tourist development
- What are the necessary or minimum benefits any proposal should be capable of demonstrating to warrant consideration of a non-urban location

If the former matters are adequately addressed the following matters should be included as minimum requirements:

- That the development be consistent with the objectives and strategies of the Regional Rural Land Use Strategy
- That the development will not compromise the rural landscape
- That the land use is compatible with the use of adjoining and surrounding lands
- That the proposal will not compromise the vision for the rural areas that involves providing for agriculture and preserving the rural farmed landscape

7 Rural Conservation Zone

The RRLUS recommended areas for application of the Rural Conservation Zone. As the reasons for this recommendation were not clear, Moira and Campaspe requested that these areas be reviewed in further detail as part of this project.

7.1 Moira

The RRLUS recommended that land west of Cobram and adjacent to the Murray River be rezoned from Farming to Rural Conservation. The current land use and vegetation cover of this area is shown in Figure 7-1. The area has been cleared and developed for irrigated and dryland agriculture and its environmental values substantially modified. Areas around Ulupna that retain native vegetation are zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (Figure 7-2). The RRLUS did not provide a strong justification for application of the Rural Conservation Zone and why this particular area has values more significant than other areas along the Murray River Corridor.

It is the recommendation of this report that the Rural Conservation Zone should not be applied to the area nominated in Moira based on the information provided in the RRLUS.

Figure 7-1 Land use and vegetation cover of land recommended in the RRLUS for Rural Conservation Zone in Moira

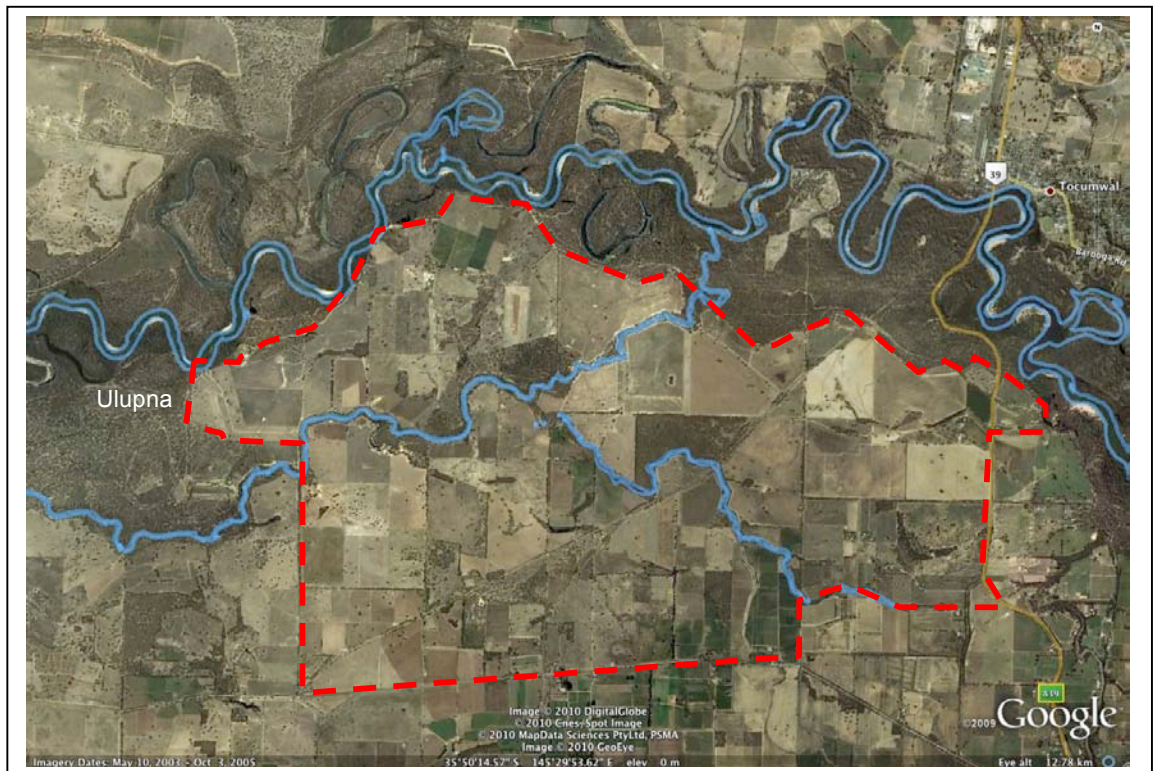
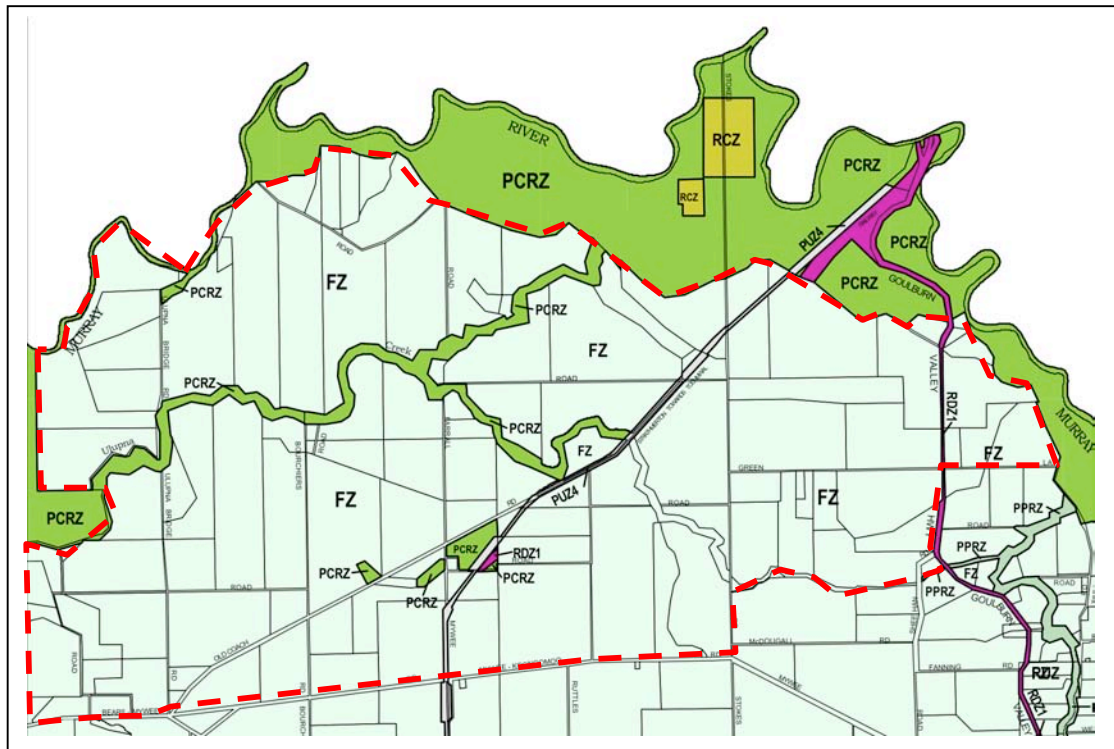


Figure 7-2 Zoning of land nominated for rezoning to Rural Conservation in Moira



7.2 Campaspe

The RRLUS nominated land around Rushworth for application of the Rural Conservation Zone based on the vegetative cover of the land. As part of this review, Campaspe undertook more detailed mapping of the area to identify the extent of dwelling development.

Closer review of the current land use and zoning of this land found that:

- Land to north of Rushworth nominated for Rural Conservation Zone is cleared, held in large allotments and is being farmed.
- Public land, including the Rushworth State Forest and zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone has been incorrectly included in the area nominated for Rural Conservation Zone.
- There is extensive dwelling development, particularly the area fringing the Public Conservation and Resource Zone.

It is the conclusion of this review is that the Rural Conservation Zone should not be applied to the land as nominated in the RRLUS.

Instead it is recommended that the:

- Area to the north should remain in the Farming Zone as Farming Zone 1 (area in hatched green in Figure 7-4)
- The area around Rushworth township (green area bordered by pink hatched line in Figure 7-4) is reviewed as part of a small towns settlement study to determine its most appropriate use and planning policy.

Figure 7-3 Zoning of land around Rushworth

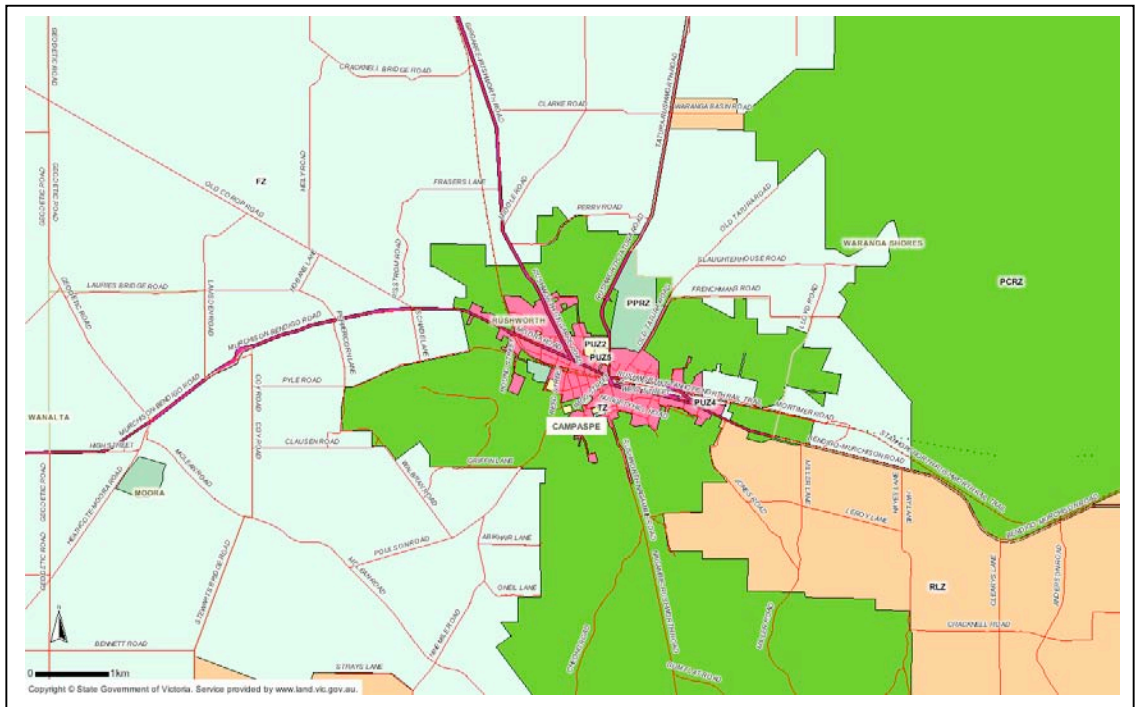


Figure 7-4 Dwelling development (pink stars) around Rushworth

